

the Nation

Volume 1 No. 16 • August 12, 1994

every two weeks

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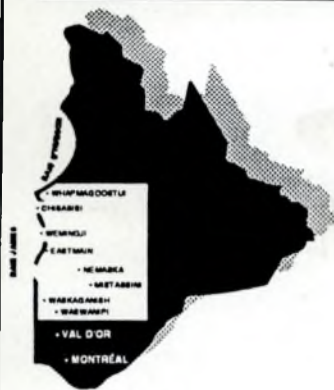
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Cree Board of Health & Social Services

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The Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (Quebec) is responsible for the administration of a hospital in Chisasibi (32 beds) as well as Community clinics (9) and one Social Service Centre. The board is currently seeking to fill the following position:

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Interested candidates are invited to send a resume before September 2, 1994 to the following address:

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Department Head - Personnel

Personnel Department

C.B.H.S.S.J.B.

Chisasibi, Quebec J0M 1E0



THANKS AND MANY MORE THANKS

This isn't so much an editorial as a thank you to all the people we met with in our mini-tour of the coastal communities a couple of weeks ago.

Thanks to George in Waskaganish, who not only put us up for the night but showed us some of that famous Cree hospitality. The country food was great at his home.

Thanks to Joe in Wemindji, who found us a place to stay and made an interview with Vern Cheecho possible, among other things. A special thanks to the Elders in the longhouse in Wemindji for the sturgeon, donuts and photos. To the ladies who thought we were "handsome boys," we thought you were cute too. You showed us it's never too late to look! Also thanks to Mike for the tour and info.

Then we were on to Chisasibi and the fantastic hospitality and warmth of the Webb family.

A thanks also goes out to Leon-Marie for putting up with our antics on the tour of LG-2 (see "Inside the Evil Empire" on page 17 for the full story).

If there is anyone we missed,

please forgive us for our senility and accept our thanks. There were a lot of people who made this trip possible.

Thanks to Air Creebec for the plane tickets so we could visit the communities. Thanks to the unknown Air Creebec employee who made sure *The Nation* made it home so we could put out this issue.

When we toured the communities we found much that surprised us. Ordinary people going to great lengths to help out their community. Everything from teaching youth art techniques to simply helping out where possible.

We found that the people are working for a better future. Unfortunately, with the limited time, we could not meet with all of you.

Please feel free to drop us a line or give us a call. As we've said before, *The Nation* is here for you and your ideas, concerns, stories, achievements and whatever else is on your mind. Share them with us and the whole Cree Nation!

Meegwich and hoping to see or hear from you soon.

FROM *THE NATION*

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Lynx in Wemindji.
Photo by Neil Diamond

AUGUST 12, 1994



PROUD OF MY NATIVE HERITAGE

My name is Andy Baribeau and I work for Hydro-Quebec thanks to the Horizon 86-96 Program, which was born after negotiations between the James Bay Crees and Hydro-Quebec. The program permitted a certain number of Crees to be employed by Hydro-Quebec. To some of you, this may seem like a contradiction in terms—that a Cree would work for Hydro. Let me just point out that I am not alone in this situation.

I am more at ease with other non-Cree Hydro employees, who accept me as an equal—a feeling other Cree workers will echo I'm sure. True, some of the non-native workers may not agree with some of the advantages accorded to the Cree employees, but it is the situation they contest and not I as a Cree. Rather, we search for common ground and not dividing lines. I have my identity and they theirs. Oddly enough, we are not only able to co-exist peacefully but we are able to work together just fine. For the first time in a very long time, I feel I am an equal, not to be judged by the colour of my skin, but to be judged only as a human being. These workers are not much different from me—and you, I'm sure. They work for a living, to feed themselves and so on. They do not work for Hydro-Quebec simply to irritate the Cree Nation.

I cannot say I have felt equal very often in my life, even in my home community of Mistissini. Discrimination and prejudice are far from being a monopoly of white society—they are a form of hatred all too common in all parts of the world, even within the Cree Nation. I may not be a "pure breed" Cree (my father is Metis), but I have a great amount of pride when it comes to my native heritage. And pride is something that urgently needs to be rediscovered among First Nations. Crees are not excluded from this, some of whom are ashamed of our ceremonies—ceremonies which are neither "satanic" nor "pagan," but Cree ceremonies. Yes, I am proud to call myself Cree. Are you?

Yet, I work for Hydro-Quebec, the great enemy of the Crees. Why? because I choose to. I was given the opportunity to work, an opportunity I am now very glad I chose. Work within our communities is scarce and I do not wish to receive social welfare unless I am left with absolutely no choice. I refuse to become the stereotypical drunken Indian on welfare—I like to defy stereotypes. I cannot live off the land because I was never given the chance to learn how to. However, I do plan on giving my children, when the Great Spirit sees it fit to see me become a father, the choice of life they wish to pursue. Unless I am able to give myself some form of financial security, I doubt this will be possible. Aspirations not much different from yours, I'm convinced.

I cannot say I am always at ease with my present situation. There are times when I will not readily admit I WORK FOR Hydro-Quebec. This is not Hydro's fault, but that of the Cree leaders. The leaders who would like to see all Crees that wish to work do so; the leaders who fight for Cree jobs; the leaders who negotiated the Agreement which gave me this job. The leaders who constantly pit the Crees against Hydro-Quebec; the leaders who use me and other Cree Hydro workers as a pawn; the leaders who make me feel like a traitor...

I am not a traitor. Neither are any of the Cree workers here. Loyalty is one of the greatest qualities I feel I can possess, and I will fight if I must to defend what I believe to be right. Courage is the other quality. I have the courage to work for a living, even for Hydro-Quebec, and I still have the courage to assert my pride when it comes to my heritage. As a Cree.

BY ANDY BARIBEAU

the **Nation**

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HYDRO WOULD BE EASY TO BOMB, SAYS UNION

When Hydro-Quebec gave its security guards vastly expanded powers of arrest and investigation, the utility said it needed to guard against a growing threat of terrorism. But a union of Hydro's own workers says security hasn't been beefed up at major Hydro installations at all. In fact, the union says it would be pretty easy for someone to come in and blow up a dam.

"Any psycho can get in," said Michel Bibeault, secretary-general of the union representing Hydro's blue-collar workers. "They haven't improved security at the dams."

Bibeault went on to give details of how easy it would be to blow up a dam.

The lax security raises an obvious question. Why did Hydro police get the expanded powers in the first place? Crees, ecologists and human-rights groups fear the main target of the revamped Hydro police force is not terrorists, but peaceful opponents of hydroelectric projects.

Hydro security now has the same powers as other police in Quebec, including possibly the authority to use wire-tapping.

The Crees and others are challenging the new powers of the Hydro police at the Quebec Human Rights Commission. The legal challenge was filed in 1993 after a secret Hydro document was leaked that outlined the 210-person police force's new mandate. The document, written in 1991 at the height of

the Persian Gulf war, expressed fear about a supposed growing terrorist threat from natives and environmentalists.

But Bibeault said Hydro police are just "playing James Bond," and doing little to actually protect Hydro installations. "When the document was leaked during the Gulf war, the Hydro-Quebec building in Montreal was a fortress," he said. "But at the dams, anyone could have gone there and planted a bomb."

Bibeault added that Hydro security guards aren't the right people to be dealing with terrorism. "There's other people paid by the government to deal with that."

He said his union, which has 7,000 members, is pressuring the utility to reign in its security force. Hydro employees are worried about the expanded powers because they have come under increasing surveillance by Hydro cops.

Bibeault said the Hydro cops have started intervening in a heavy-handed manner in ordinary employee-management disputes. Workers are winding up with criminal charges in incidents that before might have resulted in a reprimand. In one incident, a dam operator made a mistake and allowed too much water to flow through a turbine. Ordinarily, the employee would have been suspended without pay for a few months. This time, Hydro police got involved and charged him with criminal negligence.

BY ALEX ROSLIN

FIGHTERS COLLIDE OVER JAMES BAY

Two British fighter planes crashed during a refuelling manoeuvre in the skies above James Bay on Aug. 1.

The pilot and navigator of the first plane had to eject, and spent nine hours in a lifeboat on the La Grande River. Their Tornado fighter crashed, but Canadian and British military authorities didn't know the location of the wreck when we went to press. The occupants of the second Tornado succeeded in doing a crash landing at the LG-2 airport. There were no serious injuries.

The two planes were being refuelled in mid-flight by a special fuel plane when the two Tornados collided. The crash occurred at 6 p.m. on Aug. 1. The occupants of the plane that crashed were picked up at 3:30 a.m. by a Canadian military helicopter from Trenton, Ont. According to a Canadian military spokesman in Goose Bay, Nfld., one of the two occupants had problems with his flotation device. A Canadian Hercules transport plane, also from Trenton, was able to drop off a new flotation device and emergency supplies earlier in the evening.

The two fighters were returning from exercises in Alaska to their base in Goose Bay. The Canadian Forces Base in Goose Bay is a major international centre for training fighters and bombers in low-level ground-attack missions. The training base was developed during the Cold War for attacks against Soviet forces. During their training missions, the fighters fly at high speeds just above tree-top level in the Nitassinan Territory.

The flights are strongly opposed by the Innu living in the area, who have conducted a civil disobedience campaign against the flights for years. The Innu say the flights do major damage to local wildlife and the environment.

Although the Cold War is over, up to a dozen British fighters are still based in Goose Bay at any one time, according to Squadron Leader Angus McFee, the defense attache at the British High Commission in Ottawa. McFee said the downed Tornado was worth about \$25 million.

—Alex Roslin

A TRAPPER NEEDS YOUR HELP.



Freddy Jolly's trapline in the Nemaska Territory has been damaged by the construction of the Route du Nord. He is fighting for compensation and needs your help to pay for his legal defense.

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HYDRO BONDS A GOOD DEAL, SAYS UTILITY

Hydro-Quebec is trying to reassure jittery investors that Hydro bonds are still a good, solid investment.

Helen Mayer, a spokeswoman for the utility, played down a recent decision by yet another American college to sell off its Hydro bonds.

Williams College, based in Massachusetts, dumped \$1.5 million U.S. because portfolio managers said they were worried about their investment. Williams College Treasurer and Vice President for Administration David Heally stated in a letter that this wasn't a policy change on the college's part, but that portfolio managers acted for investment reasons. Earlier reports in the media said Williams College dumped its investment because of political uncertainty in Quebec.

Other colleges and universities that have dumped their Hydro bonds are Dartmouth in New Hampshire, Tufts and Boston universities as well as Wellesley College in Massachusetts.

But Mayer emphasized that not all divested for reasons specific to the Cree campaign against the bonds. "While it is true that a few U.S. schools have sold their Hydro bonds, they have

done so for reasons that were not, as some have claimed, either social, environmental or ethical. Tufts University was the only school that took action on the basis of the potential environmental and human impacts of the proposed great Whale project," she claimed.

According to Mayer, the big buyers of the bonds aren't colleges and universities, but pension funds, life insurance funds and institutional investors. "A Hydro-Quebec bond is usually purchased by the cautious investor looking for a solid investment. The Crees at the present time have a good investment," she added.

Mayer was referring to the La Grande Agreement signed in 1986, in which Crees were granted \$95 million in Hydro bonds and \$15 million in cash. The Crees' bonds yield an interest rate of 9.5 per cent.

These bonds are of the "sinking fund" variety, which means Hydro-Quebec is committed to repurchasing some each year until none are left in Cree hands. Still owned by Crees is approximately \$60 million worth of the bonds. But Mayer added that if they wished, the Crees can get rid of the bonds. "The bonds trade quite briskly," she added.

BY WILL NICHOLLS

NATIVES HAVE NOTHING TO

TEACH ME, SAYS LE HIR

PQ star candidate Richard Le Hir has landed in hot water over comments he makes in a new film about the Great Whale River Project.

"I would have something to learn from them [natives] if it could be shown that their culture demonstrated its superiority in one form or another," Le Hir says in the film, called *Power Of The North*.

"[But] when you look at what heritage has been left by native civilizations—if you could call them civilizations—there is very little."

Le Hir also takes a hard line against Cree opposition to Great Whale. "We happen to need [the power] for our own development. Who is going to tell us that we can't do it?"

Le Hir's comments were aired on national TV on Aug. 6 and were carried by Canadian Press the next day.

Within days, Liberal leader Daniel Johnson and Native Affairs Minister Christos Sirros seized on the comments as proof of the PQ's intolerance.

"[It shows] a total insensitivity to people," said Premier Johnson. "This is the hallmark of the campaign at this point."

Said Sirros, "You're not going to get very far in terms of working out agreements if you're denigrating and insulting their culture."

Le Hir was interviewed for the film in 1992 when he was still president of the Quebec Manufacturers' Association. *Power Of The North* was directed and produced by filmmakers Anna Van der Wee and Catherine Bainbridge (who is also an editor of *The Nation*). A review of *Power Of The North* appeared in *The Nation*'s July 15 issue.

—Nation staff

NATIVES MUST PAY TAXES: LE HIR

If Richard Le Hir has his way, First Nations people will have to pay all the taxes that other Quebecers pay.

That's what a Montreal-based journalist reports after having dinner with the PQ candidate in recent weeks.

Le Hir launched into a rant about the special privileges natives supposedly have and said they should be "full-paying members of society." He called for an end to all native tax exemptions.

BRIEFS CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Le Hir also said that once elected to power as part of a new PQ government, he will have to "slug it out" with the party's liaison with First Nations, David Cliche. Le Hir apparently said he doesn't share Cliche's desire to make self-government agreements with the First Nations of Quebec.

He went on to praise hydroelectric development and criticize environmentalists for being "unscientific."

—Nation staff

BROTHERS NEED FOSTER HOME

Bobby, 6, and his 4-year-old brother, Dwayne, need a Cree foster home in the Montreal area for at least a year, says Montreal's Ville Marie Child and Youth Protection Centre. "They are bright, affectionate youngsters who need a lot of reassurance," says the agency. Bobby and Dwayne's natural parents will stay in contact with their sons through pre-scheduled visits.

If you are single or a couple, with or without children and think you could

be foster parents to these very rewarding boys, you are asked to contact Homes For Children at 514-989-1781.

—Nation staff

WAPISTAN, RON IRWIN AT AGA

The Grand Council/CRA Annual General Assembly in Eastmain is going to have some distinguished guests—Wapistan and Ron Irwin. Wapistan (a.k.a. Lawrence Martin) won a Juno for his album, *Lawrence Martin Is Wapistan*. Ron is of course the federal Indian Affairs Minister. The assembly is happening Aug. 23 to 25.

The Cree Nation Gathering, which was originally supposed to take place in Mistissini before the AGA, has now been postponed until after the provincial election on Sept. 12. It will be held on or around Sept. 19, and the location may be changed. Issues to be discussed at the gathering include the mission of the Band Councils and Cree regional government, as well as social issues. Romeo Saganash is the coordinator of the gathering.

—Alex Roslin

CANADA IGNORING PQ THREAT

Canada is ignoring the territorial dispute between the Parti Quebecois and the Crees of James Bay, said Matthew Coon Come at the Cree Nations Gathering in The Pas.

The Grand Chief accused Ottawa politicians of wanting to ignore the problem because they are afraid of stirring up anti-federalist sentiment in Quebec during an election campaign.

"It's time to deal with this problem," Coon Come said at a meeting of Crees from across North America at the end of July.

"It will be too late when the separatists are in power and we will be alone in opposing them."

Coon Come's comments were reported in *La Presse*. (See a full report on the gathering on page 28.)

The PQ says First Nations will remain part of Quebec if the province votes to separate from Canada. But Coon Come disagreed, saying that First Nations rights and self-government must be addressed before the provincial election.

—Nation staff

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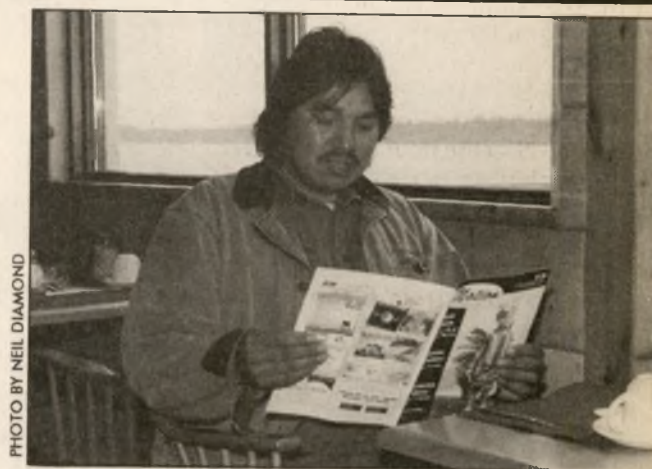


PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

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CHIEFS SAY NO TO DEVELOPMENT

Chiefs of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation say all mining, forestry and tourism on their traditional lands that does not have First Nations approval must be halted immediately.

The call came in a tough resolution passed by the Chiefs at their annual Keewaywin Concerence in New Post, Ont. June 21-23. The resolution covers 48 First Nations across most of northern Ontario. The Union of Ontario Indians, made up of member 41 First Nations, passed a similar resolution on June 30.

A report on the resolutions was carried in *Wawatay News*, based in Sioux Lookout, Ont. —*Nation staff*

NOMINATIONS FOR AWARDS OPEN

John Kim Bell was in Montreal on July 20 to announce the opening of nominations for the second National Aboriginal Achievement Awards.

Bell, a Mohawk from Kahnawake, is Canada's first aboriginal orchestra conductor. He established the aboriginal achievement awards and the Canadian Native Arts Foundation after witnessing the poverty and social problems in other native communities across the country.

Bell started taking piano lessons at 8. At 18, he was the youngest conductor in the U.S. at the time. He conducted four symphonies across Canada last year.

The achievement awards will take place in Vancouver in March 1995. The awards cover outstanding career achievements by natives, Inuit and Metis. There are 12 categories and one lifetime-achievement award. The areas include: arts, business, commerce, education, housing, law, media, medicine, social and health services, science and sports. Nomination forms are available from the Canadian Native Arts Foundation at 514-588-3328. —*Nation staff*

FORMER PRIEST JAILED FOR ABUSE

A former priest and boy scout leader was sentenced to six years in jail for abusing at least 16 boys while he lived and worked in three native communities in northwest Ontario.

Ralph Knight Munk Rowe, 48, pled guilty to 28 counts of sexual abuse and one count of common assault during a sentencing hearing held in Wunnumin

Nos ancêtres, dont les noms sont gravés ci-dessus, ont forgé et perpétué le mode de vie traditionnel des Cris. À travers cette région, ils voyageaient chaque année à leur manière, sans moyen mécanique, et sur persistance à vouloir suivre des itinéraires se fondant sur leur ferme volonté de survivre grâce à leur seule force physique et à leur endurance. Une telle persévérance en ces temps difficiles est la preuve de leur attachement à leur mode de vie. Les Cris de la génération d'aujourd'hui et des générations à venir doivent empêcher la disparition des connaissances acquises par leurs ancêtres.

Our ancestors, whose names are inscribed hereafter, invented and carried on the traditional Cree way of life. Each year, they travelled through this region by their own means, without any mechanical assistance. Through this feat, they made an annual trip with no mechanical means. Their persistence in travelling this route was based on a strong will to survive using only physical strength and endurance. Such persistence and patience, veracity during those hard times are proof of the Cree's attachment to their way of life. The Cree of this generation and future generations must not allow the knowledge acquired by their ancestors to fade away.

[illegible]

Cree Memorial Plaque, at LG-2

Lake on June 30. The assaults took place in Wunnumin Lake, Big Trout Lake and Osnaburgh. Rowe was described by a Crown attorney as "the most prolific child abuser in Ontario's northwest." He becomes eligible for parole in three years.

About 250 residents attended the emotional, eight-hour hearing. Many wept as the Crown attorney went into details of the assaults, which took place between 1975 and 1982. By the time he finished, most had lapsed into stunned silence, said a report in *Wawatay News*.

Rowe, who was abused himself as a child, was ordained an Anglican minister with the Keewatin Diocese in June 1975. While living and working in Wunnumin, he frequently invited boys to stay with him at the mission house, and took them on overnight camping and canoe trips. The molestations occurred during these outings, often while the boys were asleep.

In his statement to the court, Wunnumin Lake Chief Simon Winnipegotonga spoke of his son, who committed suicide in 1988. Like other boys his age, he was involved in many activities organized by Rowe. The Chief wondered if the suicides of his son and other boys meant they were among Rowe's victims. "We believed that he

served the Lord with all his heart and we trusted him with our children, who are from the Creator," he said. "Ralph has not only violated our children's physical and emotional well-being, but he has also shattered their belief in spirituality."

—Nation staff

GAS-SNIFFING PLAGUES DAVIS INLET

Gas-sniffing is causing more problems in Davis Inlet.

Chief Simeon Tshakapesh says at least 42 children in this Labrador Innu community are abusing solvents to get high. "Things are getting worse," he said in a *Montreal Gazette* article.

The community has been struck by frequent suicide attempts—three in one recent week. Many of the 17 gas sniffers sent to Alberta for treatment last year have gone back to abusing solvents.

The Chief said youths have been siphoning gas from boats at a dock, draining gas from unused skidoos and sucking the last drops from a hose at the gas station when it closes down.

The article said Davis Inlet is also reeling from recent revelations that many of the children have been sexually abused.

—Nation staff

The Nation does Wemindji



PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

by Alex Roslin

Residents of Wemindji just celebrated the 35th anniversary of the move of their village from Old Factory Island to its present location. Celebrations continued until Aug. 7 on the island and in the new community.

The Nation's William Nicholls, Neil Diamond and Alex Roslin were on hand to witness the festivities and take a tour of the community with Mike McGee, Wemindji's economic development director. The celebrations included a concert by Moose Factory's Vern Cheechoo and other musicians (an interview with Vern will appear in our next issue). At the centre of the village was a tall shaptuaan (longhouse) that was filled with the smells of spruce boughs and food being prepared Cree-style. There, we saw a exhibit of traditional, hand-made hunting, cooking and eating implements, some of them over a hundred years old.

Our tour started with the lynx farm. We learned that after eight years of operations, Wemindji Fur Ranchers Ltd, the world's largest lynx farm, is closing down. The reason is simple, said Wemindji economic development director Mike McGee. "The anti-fur lobby—they're the ones who brought the fur prices down. The band cannot absorb any loss in any businesses any more. Money's just too tight."

Fur prices have fallen by half in just five years. Now, it costs far more to raise a lynx than its pelt is worth. The cost to raise it is \$200 a year, whereas a 2 or 3-year-old adult Canadian lynx goes for only \$200. That's half what it would fetch five years ago. The pelt of a Siberian lynx sells for \$500, barely breaking even.

The Wemindji band-owned lynx farm has been losing money for three years. The Band Council voted in May to close the lynx farm and get rid of all 600 adult lynx and 400 kittens.

Canada Fur Consultants, based in Ontario, has been hired to find the lynx new homes in sanctuaries, zoos or wildlife preserves. A couple of kittens have been already sold to Montreal's Biodome indoor zoo.

Four permanent jobs will be lost when the lynx farm closes, but Mike promised that the farm's employees will be found other work by the band.

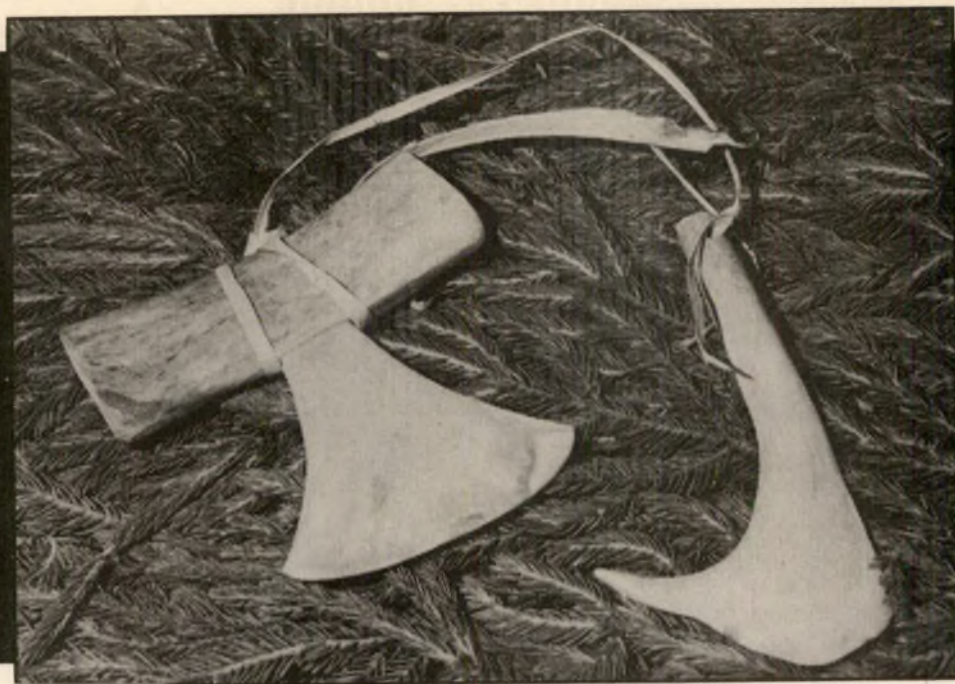
Falling fur prices were also responsible for the closing of Wemindji's fox farm last December. Ironically, the environmentalists who caused the fur prices to fall forced Wemindji to slaughter 1,800 foxes when it closed the farm. It cost \$150 a year to raise a fox, whereas a fox pelt went for only \$50.

Our tour of the lynx farm included a stop to pet a Siberian male that had been tamed. We were told that some lynx can be turned into pets—so long as no one finds out, because it's illegal in Canada. Also, you have to watch your fingers; they like to nibble.

The cages are cleaned while the lynx are still in them. Occasionally, a lynx will vault over the person doing the cleaning and run loose in the farm. But they never escape because they don't know how to hunt, so they just hang out in the farm eating scraps until they can be caught in a net.

For those interested in a unique pet experience, an adult male/female pair goes for \$1,500 and a 1-year-old kitten is \$500. Info: 819-978-0264.

PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND



Canoe shop

The next stop on the tour was the canoe shop, open since 1985.

Mike, who used to work in the canoe shop before going to work for the band, said next summer the shop will start making canoes for the first time. Now, the canoe shop is just doing repairs. But that's just what some of the canoes we saw in the shop needed; some of them looked like they had been brought in for an overhaul just in time.



PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

Old Factory Islander

Just down the river from the canoe shop, you can see a boat which was hauled out of the water three years ago and is mounted near the river bank for repairs. Leslie Kakabat, Ernie Hughboy and George Nat are the three salty guys who've been fixing the boat up for the last two months, making her seaworthy again.

The Old Factory Islander has been completely refitted with all manner of fancy gadgetry—radar, communications and navigational equipment. Leslie, the captain, looked with pride at the new equipment. "It's like Christmas around here," he said. "We'll be excited when it's launched."

The launching was scheduled for the first week of August. The boat will be used to move supplies to trappers' camps and freight between Chisasibi, Wemindji and Eastmain.

Unfortunately, the Old Factory Islander won't be too useful in helping out with Wemindji's fishery program because 98 per cent of the fish in James Bay swim within three miles of the coast, according to government studies.

The water there is too shallow and filled with too many reefs for Wemindji's boat. Only smaller boats and canoes can ply these waters.

The fishery program is a popular band-run initiative to provide free fish to all Wemindji residents. A van comes to your door and offers you your choice of fish, smoked or not. Elmer Visitor runs the fish-

ery program.

Fred Cheezo, the local fur officer for the Wemindji Cree Trappers Association, told Will Nicholls in a phone interview that the program is "very good" for the community because a lot of working people can't get out. He wants to see more programs of this sort in the future.

Restos

Of course, we also tried out Wemindji's two restaurants, where Neil tried out the dishes and pondered his next review (see the next issue).

It was in the hotel restaurant that Will and Neil (I was in the bathroom) finally got to meet Wemindji Chief Walter Hughboy, who seemed pleasantly surprised to see *The Nation* in his community.

Highway

One last piece of community news is that the road from Wemindji to the James Bay Highway is nearly complete. Seventy five miles are done, and there's only 25 miles to go. It should be finished sometime in September.

It also looks like Wemindji is going to beat Eastmain in getting hooked up to the highway. A few days after we left Wemindji, we were at the fine dining establishment at Kilometre 381 and ran into a Cree from Eastmain who is working on Eastmain's road to the highway. He said it's about half-way done and should be open by November.

A new beginning

IMPACTS OF FORESTRY OPERATIONS FROM THE CREE HUNTERS' AND TRAPPERS' PERSPECTIVE

by Paul Dixon

"Less and less, the birds sang, until one day we heard their beautiful songs no more and our hearts cried out as we hugged our children and told them to pray. Nothing could slow the loggers down."

The writer of this document has been practicing the Cree traditional way of life, hunting and trapping, for approximately 25 years. During these years I have witnessed our trapline slowly being destroyed. This same trapline was where my grandfather and father taught me how to hunt and respect wildlife.

In the early years, I felt the abundance of wildlife before the land was exploited by forestry operations. Belonging to a large family, our lives were very much attached to the land and dependent on it for most of our needs. Now married with three children and still staying with a large group of family members on our depleted trapline, me and my brothers and our families do not feel safe or confident to carry on that tradition.

In my opinion, if people lose contact with nature, the respect for other life will also be lost. The hunters and their families never realized how forestry operations and other development on their hunting territories would affect their lives and their way of living. For some, this was the beginning of the end. Even though the trappers are the same people who signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, a document supposedly there to protect and enhance their way of life, this has not helped with the situation of their hunting territories.

During the past 35 years, healthy Waswanipi traplines have been slowly disappearing. The logging continues today. One has to be aware that hunters and trappers still out on the land can best monitor the impact of exploitation on wildlife habitat. And now they are crying "foul."

Paul Dixon is a hunter and trapper in the Waswanipi Territory. The original version of this document was written in 1987. Since then Paul has modified and updated it. This is the first time it has appeared in print.

The public at large must understand and be made aware of forestry impacts on our environment and other users of the land. They must know the fact that somewhere in our comfortable homes, between the walls is a "tree"—taken from out there on the land, we don't know where. That "tree" was a home or a shelter for another world.

Forestry operations have a very heavy negative impact on the lives of Crees, the land and the wildlife habitat. Large clearcut areas are very devastated as all animals need shelter of trees and vegetation for their safety—especially large animals such as moose, caribou and bear. The periodic cycle movement of large and small animals during the whole year is hindered. Habitats and mating pathways of wildlife established over generations in seclusion are destroyed, which endangers the prospect of future generations of wildlife.

Moose and bear are not plentiful. Ask any native hunter if they killed a moose or a bear during the last hunting season. I am sure most will respond negatively.

Moose yards, if not cut out, are too small. The animal stays for a while and eventually continues on.

Due to logging, moose travel from one patch of forest to another. Therefore, their most dangerous enemies, wolf and man, discovered them much easier, especially during winter.

During winter, moose has difficulty running in logged areas. His chances of survival are greatly reduced. Normally, the animal would run under the tall spruces where snow is very soft if the area had not been cut out. This is one of the reasons why moose will avoid logged out areas. The browse they feed on is destroyed also.

Forestry roads, accessible all year, are being built into large mountain areas. Such areas are the heart

A new beginning...



of the moose lands where most moose have their winter habitats, playgrounds and mating grounds.

Since more of the traplines are clearcut, we noticed another serious problem arising. Each year, less of the female moose species are pregnant in spring. In our opinion, we hunters and trappers have come to the conclusion that too many of the moose mating grounds are logged out, which are totally different yards from the habitats they use in the winter time.

It is the feeling of the trappers that the information they provide to loggers for the protection of certain areas for wildlife habitat, especially moose yards, is not used properly. The moose yard would be cut over anyway and this is where we used to get our steady supply of moose meat. It even goes to the point where non-native hunting camps suddenly pop up around these areas that were indicated as moose yards by the trappers.

Naturally with the vast amounts of clearcut areas, our distances of travel for moose are much greater.

During the mating season, moose can be called from any of the access roads. When this happens, the moose travel the forestry roads more often than usual. The moose then become very easy targets. There were situations where we found the insides (intestines) of three moose in the same area, all along the roads. Nobody will argue against someone saying that forestry roads have drastically affected the moose population.

Most animals are killed by chance when crossing or walking on logging roads, such as moose and bear. Also they can be pursued by the many roads, joining together. Escape is not made easy for the large animal.

In logged out areas, most terrain is not walkable by humans

because of too many trees laying around and ground badly broken by heavy machinery.

During the winter operations, bear and moose habitats are also destroyed. Moose are forced to scatter. Strip-cutting is done for the sake of window-dressing near or on swamplands, mostly where timber is small. Rarely is strip-cutting done on winter roads. Where strip-cutting was done, timber can be cut any time, mostly for financial reasons for the logging operations.

Because of many access roads, the influx of sports hunters, poachers, non-natives and natives alike has become tremendous. They all overkill. It's during sports hunting season. We Cree hunters have found animal carcasses along the roads, fish waste and whole pieces of fish on shorelines.

EVEN THE SMALL GAME, SUCH AS RABBIT AND PARTRIDGE, is greatly reduced in number.

With access roads being built all over the Cree Territory, other development follows, such as mining exploration and drilling. This also very much disturbs the wildlife habitat. The drilling also leaves oil and garbage in the areas where operations take place.

Predators such as foxes and wolves travel easier and farther on access roads, doing more damage to other wildlife than before.

Because of logging roads, there has been theft of hunting equipment, skidoos, sleds, canoes, tents, outboard motors and such small items as cooking utensils in our once-remote hunting and trapping camps.

Logging roads go right down to the lake or river, with landing spots made for trailer boats—sometimes three or four landing spots

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Beginning...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

on a big lake.

Logging roads are used for landing strips for Cessnas and small-engine planes, especially during moose season.

Due to logging roads, fish spawning areas are disturbed or destroyed. Favourite old spots for bear trapping are disturbed or destroyed also. Roads or culverts get in the way of centuries-old net fishing spots. Culverts on roads are too small. The small culverts become a problem when travelling by canoe. Portaging becomes an unnecessary burden. Due to forestry roads, more fires are also happening.

Also due to these numerous access roads, there have been more roadkills of all sorts of animals, especially the beaver. These kills are made by vehicles, poachers and sports hunters.

Most beaver will build their homes along the roads, using the road as a dam. The beaver becomes an easy target for poachers. The beavers are also considered a nuisance by logging companies. Most hunters and trappers are against beaver relocation projects by logging companies. It has to do with one important factor. The young ones (pups) are not considered in these projects. They are left to die, period.

The survival of any hunting society is based on the preservation of all young ones, or on the rotation from one specimen of animal to another, so certain species can grow (re-populate). Now you can see why the beavers are left alone sometimes. The logging companies' plan to relocate just adult beavers in spring or early summer leaves the young pups to die. Relocation of beaver families to a foreign area in late summer or in the fall season means they are certainly doomed.

This beautiful animal lives by instinct alone. They will not have time to scout the new area, let alone build a dam, a proper home and gather food for the long winter.

Certain companies' proposals to eliminate the nuisance beaver (Canada's symbol on the nickel) and to throw the carcass 50 feet away from any waterway is so outrageous to us Cree hunters and trappers, that we want no part of it at all.

Too many sports hunting camps are built around the logging area because of access roads. This puts pressure on wildlife, even in remote areas. The logging roads also thaw out too soon in spring while there is still snow everywhere else. This very much affects the hunters and trappers. Because of no snow on roads, the equipment used such as skidoos and sleds is more prone to faster wear due to the gravel.

BECAUSE OF LOGGING ROADS, THERE IS AN INFLUX OF BLUEBERRY pickers doing permanent damage to blueberry bushes with their large scrapers. These same people also poach in the territory.

The rate of killing small game in and around these roads does not match the rate of small game

reproducing. Close monitoring by us Cree hunters shows a constant decline in grouse, partridge, hare, etc.

Because of many logging roads over a large area, there are just not enough wildlife conservation officers around to patrol the whole area. We Cree hunters and trappers have witnessed many illegal activities on our traplines due to access roads.

Since forestry operations have started on our traplines, there has been a steady decline in waterfowl coming to land or feed in regular old feeding grounds where our duck blinds are situated.

We have seen sports hunters and fishermen not disposing their waste or garbage from temporary camp sites. We see the prospect of having a clean environment diminishing if the present situation is not corrected soon enough. The garbage, waste, etc. are also not very good for wildlife.

There are many places where the forest has been cut right down to the shoreline, especially where there was winter cutting. You could only see it while canoeing or skidooring on certain lakes or rivers. There are piles of logs left on roadsides, especially on winter roads. The piles of logs were left there to rot. If you go back there now, the logs would still be there. We Cree hunters feel that government regulations regarding forestry guidelines are not respected when the loggers are cutting. Especially where only winter roads are going.

The logging companies have a knack for leaving trees standing in the right place to make it look less damaging to the eye. Eventually they all get blown over.

WHAT WERE ONCE NAVIGABLE RIVERS ARE BLOCKED BY TREES blown over by winds or by careless cutting.

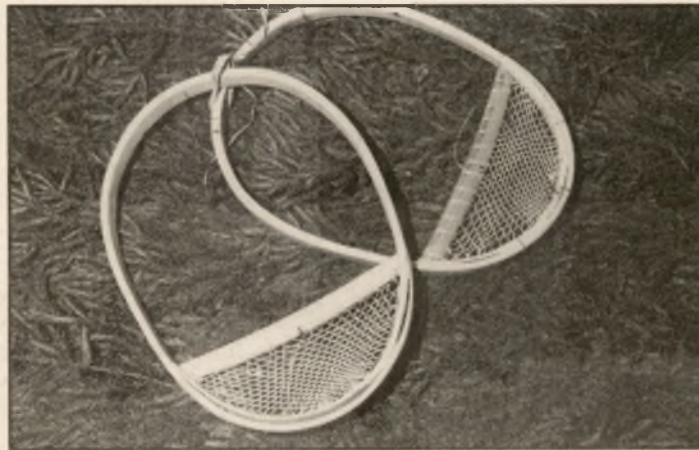
The old temporary hunting camp sites, hunting paths, summer trails, skidoo trails and portages that existed over many generations are all permanently destroyed in one day during logging operations.

Many surrounding areas of low-lying rivers, ponds, lakes and swamps have been destroyed by heavy machines. Such areas were heavily contaminated by oil, which eventually drained into the main lakes or rivers. Many small streams were destroyed completely.

Many feeding plants (vegetation) of different wildlife were destroyed during logging.

There were such experiences as rabbit snares and martin traps, all trampled on by machines during the winter. It is my belief that this was done intentionally, as I am sure the operator of the machine noticed the trail made by snowshoes and slight common sense would have indicated to him to check the area out first before starting operations.

Dump sites of logging camps are left unclean. Paper, plastic bags, etc. are strewn over a large area—old buses, broken down pick-up trucks, old machine parts and tires, metals, big scrap gas tanks, burnt-out mobile shops, plastic oil pails, etc. were left where they were last used.



"We hunters and trappers feel we have been set back 300 to 600 years."

They are still there today, but the loggers are long gone.

Large sand pits are everywhere—eyesores. Most sand pits are hills so the land keeps eroding around these pits. Burning of waste cutting drives large animals away. Erosion of shorelines will vastly reduce the wildlife population. A lot of unnecessary trees are destroyed during the process of logging, such as birch, poplar, cedar and tamarack—unchecked forestry activities destroying traplines. Sewage pollution goes to lakes or rivers from logging camps. After logging operations, scarification of the land destroys all new growth. Only black spruce is planted. There are traplines that have only large lakes or large burnt-out areas, but what little land was available was logged out. Sports hunters, strangers, are shooting near our hunting camps.

Our hunting dogs, which we need and value highly, are killed or stolen when the hunting camp is left alone. (In one such incident, the dog was shot while the hunter was only 25 metres away.)

There is a lot of needless killing of animals. In one incident, a bear was found dead and thrown away. One of the most highly respected animals of the Cree Nation was found at a logging camp dump.

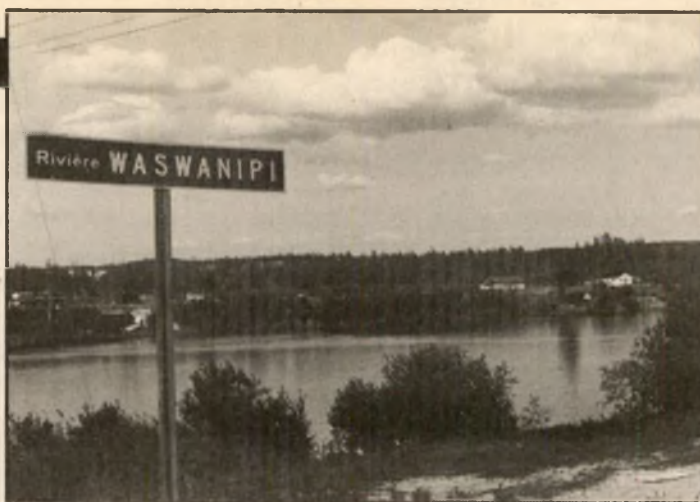
The logging companies have no respect for other users of the land, especially for the native hunters and trappers. In some cases, trappers and hunters were even refused to cut trees for firewood by some logging companies. Because of the lack of communication between the hunters and loggers, wildlife habitats are needlessly destroyed.

Because of vandalism to camps, excessive damage was done to cabins also. In one incident, all windows and doors were stolen. The necessity was there for caretakers. Some tallymen and trappers have tried the idea of having caretakers for the cabins. But it was too expensive to carry on and was dropped immediately because of the constant flow of strangers into the land on the logging roads.

There were incidents where non-natives stole the trap and the fur-bearing animal that was caught in the trap. This action just makes life harder for the native who already has a hard time hunting on a depleted trapline. Our nets and catch are stolen most of the time during sports fishing season, or just any other time.

We are finding far less animals in our traps as the surrounding traplines are cut out also. The need to travel a greater distance to hunt and trap for animals is there and realized.

YES, THE PROVINCE HAS FORESTRY REGULATIONS. BUT THEY are not respected by certain companies as we hunters and trappers have found out, living and trying to hunt in the same area where they were cutting. I can only guess that the loggers believed we would never take notice or even write about it one day. We



“There were situations where our lives were threatened by non-natives who used logging roads... Nobody likes a gun pointed at him just for blueberries.”

because of heavy or even light snowfall in the clearcut area.

In summer, logging machines damage eggs laid by birds, partridges, owls and waterfowl. The young ones of these creatures are also destroyed before they can fly. Also destroyed are young pups of skunks, groundhogs, porcupines, martins, foxes and squirrels—wildlife that have their young in holes and that burrow in the ground.

Animals that hibernate for winter in dens are disturbed or destroyed. There were incidents where non-native workers found dens where bears were hibernating. This was uncommon before. Dens of hibernating animals are definitely destroyed during winter. In one incident, a bear and his den were bulldozed over to make way for the road.

There were situations where our lives were threatened by non-natives who used the logging roads. We will never know why. More often, it's happening now because the area is full of roads. Nobody likes a gun pointed at him just for blueberries. This has happened. Talk about wildlife; it's getting dangerous to live in the bush.

A lot of logging roads pass near or right through old campsites. That is why we live or see our hunting camps along the roads. The logging roads come to us, not us to them.

In logged out areas, you will find hunting look-outs on tree-tops on most lakes where there are access roads. Most are built to stay permanently (meaning three or four years).

In our hunting way of life, we have always used the moon as a time-keeper of the periodical phenomenal behavioural patterns and movements of most wildlife on our traplines.

Because of this knowledge, we know when certain wildlife are mating, when they are carrying their young ones, when they have eggs, certainly when animals would have young ones (pups).

We also knew when certain fish would spawn. All this by carefully watching the moon, water, land and the seasons.

After the area has been logged out, keeping track of the movements of certain wildlife by the moon itself is rendered useless.

OPERATION LIBERATION

CREES TAKE TROUBLED KIDS OUT OF PROBLEM-
PLAGUED VAL D'OR YOUTH CENTRE

They were the cutest kids in the world. It's not what you might expect from Cree kids in a centre for troubled youth in Val d'Or. But that's what we found—half a dozen of the sweetest, most open-hearted, curious and funny kids you could meet.

by Alex Roslin

They were each there for their own individual, unique reasons. Some had a difficult home life. Others were young offenders. We met a soft-spoken teenaged boy with an intense face who was from Wasikaganish and had lost his brother to suicide not long ago. He said he wanted to get into painting when he got back home. He told us in moving words about himself and some of his thoughts, and then finished by saying, "I'm not good with words." He left us smiling with his humility. There was also a pretty girl from Chisasibi who had curly hair and was convinced I looked like Patrick Swayze.

But despite their good humour, the day we visited the Cree unit of the Centre d'orientation l'Etape, the kids were nervous and worried. It was Monday, and they had spent the weekend thinking about the news that they would soon be taken out of the centre and transferred some 500 km away to Cree Territory. They are being moved, first, to a group home in Mistissini, then in mid-September to a bush camp near LG-3 run by Chisasibi Elder and trapper Robbie Matthew Sr., where their therapy will include being immersed in the traditional Cree way of life.

They might not know it, but these kids are at the very heart of a profound change in how Crees will relate to the social services and justice systems. That Monday, all they knew is they were being taken away from the counsellors and home they had known for many months, and sometimes years. In fact, they are part of a revolution.

Ten years of troubled relations between the centre in Val d'Or and Cree social services workers came to an end on the afternoon of Aug. 1. That day, three officials of

the Cree Board of Health and Social Services walked into the Cree unit and took five kids back to Cree land.

On Wednesday, July 27, the Director of Youth Protection for the Cree Territory, Soraya Cote, sent the centre a letter that must have raised a few eyebrows. "Serious problems exist for all Cree children which are entrusted to the reception centre," wrote Soraya. The problems, she said, are "so serious that they jeopardize the readjustment process of the Cree youth to such an extent that their development can be put at risk. Furthermore, their rights are not respected. Consequently, an alternative has to be examined."

After running off a long list of problems with the centre, Soraya revealed the alternative she had in mind. "We advise you that steps are immediately undertaken in order to repatriate all the budgets presently available to your centre for Cree clientele," she wrote. "Please make sure that all the youth from the Bridge [the Cree unit] are prepared and ready to leave the reception centre with all their personal belongings by 1 o'clock on Monday afternoon, August 1st, 1994."

"We had no choice any more," Soraya explained as we waited for 1 o'clock to roll around in the offices of the health board's lawyer in Val d'Or. "We had to do something."

The lawyer was brought in because no one knew what reception they would get when the health board officials arrived at the centre. Several days had passed since the centre's director had gotten Soraya's letter, and he hadn't responded. Soraya didn't know if the centre would let the kids go. If it didn't, the Crees' lawyer was ready to file an injunction demanding the kids' release. As a youth protection director,

Soraya has almost as much power under the law as a police officer or judge, and is responsible for deciding where a troubled youth will be placed, whether it's a centre in Val d'Or or a bush camp in James Bay.

"I'm very confident," she said just one hour before we descended on the centre. "We can't do worse than they have."

But everyone was still tense. It was as if a Cree Chief was planning to go to Sault Ste-Marie and take Cree kids out of residential school without bothering to ask anyone. The operation almost felt like a military assault.

Soraya made us promise not to take photos when we got to the centre because it might have made a potentially difficult situation even worse. Over the weekend, Soraya, who is Innu herself, had to reassure some of the kids who had questions about the move. Also, one kid who was being transferred to a group home instead of to Mistissini ran away from the centre. Soraya said the kid might have run away because she didn't want to be around to watch her friends leave.

The incident demonstrates yet again the centre's bad relations with the Cree health board. As part of her job, Soraya is responsible for these kids and must be informed of any developments affecting their safety, and so must the parents. But the Crees are rarely informed right away when a child runs away, and usually only when they return. In fact, sometimes it seems like the Crees are the last ones to know. This time, Soraya was told only when she herself called the centre on Monday on other business.

When we arrived at the centre on Aug. 1, there was uncertainty in the air. Soraya was in the office of the Cree unit's supervisor, discussing the transfer of the kids. The supervisor had just come back from vacation, and after six years of counselling Cree kids, was suddenly learning that his work was at an abrupt end. He was clearly upset. As we saw later, he cared deeply for the children in his care, and they felt the same way about him.

Three counsellors were sitting in the unit's large, sunny living room. Their jobs

had also suddenly ceased to exist. The kids were sitting around, talking and laughing from time to time, but very aware of the situation unfolding around them.

We sat at a table with Marlene Dixon, a Cree from Waswanipi and the interim inland supervisor of Cree social services, and waited for the van that was to take the kids to Mistissini. Driving it was Joe Neeposh, coordinator of the group home in Mistissini. Joe was running late, so everyone sat in a circle and we met the kids. At first they were shy, but they opened up quickly. They were wonderful—warm, fun-loving and bright.

Later, as everyone packed into the van, one Cree girl who had stayed a little quieter than the others burst into tears. She was the only one in the unit staying behind. Her mother lives in Val d'Or and the regional social services department refused a Cree request to have the girl transferred to Mistissini along with her friends. Soraya sat with her for long time, trying to comfort her. (Since then, the girl has retained a lawyer to take the regional youth protection director to court, because she also wants to go to Mistissini.)

BACK AT THE LAWYER'S OFFICE, SORAYA told us that run-aways were actually a growing problem at the centre. This had made the transfer to Mistissini even more urgent. Since the spring, Soraya said there had been a marked increase in the number of kids running away.

It was evidence that something was very wrong with the centre's treatment of native children. The most dramatic proof of this came when two Inuit kids hung themselves in the centre, one in 1988 and the other in 1991. The suicides were so alarming that Quebec's Youth Protection Commission launched an inquiry into the centre's treatment of Inuit and Cree kids, and in the end recommended that they be taken back to their own communities. Today, Inuit health officials are closely watching the Cree repatriation effort and may follow in their footsteps.

Soraya ran off a long list of problems with the centre. First, the centre was getting \$300,000 a year from the Quebec government to train and hire Cree youth counselors, but in the last 10 years, not one Cree had been hired into a permanent position in the unit that handles Cree kids. That makes \$3 million of wasted money over the last decade. On top of that, Quebec provides the Val d'Or centre about \$900,000 a year to operate the Cree unit. Soraya wants that money transferred to the Crees to help run the new bush camp.



She added that the kids had no meaningful programs to help them build a strong sense of identity so they could reintegrate into their communities. "Where I see a lack is they're not doing anything appropriate to the culture. It's a very different environment. They lose contact with their families. There is a change of food and then you expect them to be healthy. They have wild food maybe once per season," she said.

"What do they do all day," she asked rhetorically. "I don't know. You tell me." Some of the kids continued their education, but Soraya described the centre's educators as "poorly trained" and said they often speak only French. The psychologist at the centre also doesn't speak English, and certainly not Cree.

"When a youth is in crisis, it is unthinkable that he or she cannot communicate because the educator does not understand nor speak his language," wrote Soraya in her letter to the centre's director. "How can a Cree child progress in such an environment?"

Robbie Matthew's bush camp will be set up with technical help requested from the Cree Trappers' Association, as well as educational resources from the Cree School Board. The camp will have room for 12 kids, and appropriate school courses will be planned.

Soraya acknowledged that not all the kids will be happy in the bush camp: "Some of these kids may not adjust easily." But she spoke with optimism about the new system. Before coming to James Bay, she

worked in social services for many years in northern Alberta, northern Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. It was in the NWT where the first bush camps for young offenders appeared just a few years ago. Kids participated in trapping, hunting and cooking, and learned about the land and native culture. Soraya said all this helped the kids develop a sense of identity and made them less likely to commit an offense when they went home.

"Sometimes you can't change the environment these kids came from, so you have to give them the tools and skills to deal with that environment," she said. "You give them a sense of ownership. The kid will go back to the same friends, so they have to be strong enough to make their own decisions and say, 'I don't want to sniff or I don't want to drink.' We can't lock them up until they're 18."

Soraya said when kids are sent from northern communities to southern youth centres, they sometimes come back even less able to cope with their lives. That's because they've been living in a very structured environment where their daily routines are all planned out for them. When they go back home, they find it hard to re-adjust to the freedom. "They watch cable TV all day. Sometimes they reoffend just so they can go back when they're bored," said Soraya.

"I do believe they need to be proud of who they are. What's here," she said, putting her hand over her heart, "has to come out."

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Inside the Evil Empire



After years of fighting against the infamous Mega-Corp Hydro-Quebec in the northeastern United States, I was about to finally visit the dams that I felt had damned my people. It is hard to approach this type of story without a bias or an opinion, so I didn't even try.

by William Nicholls

I was about to tour what one of my Earth First! friends nicknamed, "The Evil Empire."

As a Hydro-Quebec pamphlet entitled *Everywhere you look, we are there for you!* put it, the "irresistible attraction of the Middle North and the Abitibi-Temiscamingue" is the La Grande complex ("the BIG complex" in English). They also called the James Bay Territory "Radissonia." Most people I know never called it this, but Crees never knew it was "Rupert's Land" either, so what the hell.

Two tours were available to visitors, of the LG-1 and LG-2 sites. *The Nation*, consisting of Neil, a most excellent photographer and sometimes restaurant critic, Alex, ace reporter and laid back layout artist, and

of course myself, sometimes dysfunctional writer and activist-turned-editor, decided that we'd tour the biggest, baddest dam ever to hit the Far, excuse me, Middle North.

After hitting the yellow brick road we were off to see the wonderful Wizard of Oz—well, actually that marvel of marvels, part of the wet techno-dream of Robert Bourassa, La Grande-2, the largest underground generating station in the world, according to HQ. Our guide of guides was a 14-year HQ public relations veteran named Leon-Marie Hachez.

Our first meeting with him had him perplexed and confused since we said we'd like to sample the HQ cafeteria at the end of the tour. We patiently explained to him that Neil was in the habit of reviewing the

Far or Middle North's culinary delights. He was suspicious of us and our request right from the start. It must have been our red eyes, left-over souvenirs from the night/morning before.

Before heading into the initial presentation theatre, the boys from *The Nation* loaded up on goodies from the HQ company store.

The presentation started with all the info we already knew. Soon we were crunching Cheezies (Alex), Pringle's potato chips (Neil) and smoked almonds (me). After hearing how a dam works, how the La Grande complex supplies almost but not quite half the electricity needs of the province of Quebec and being bored half to death by the Mickey Mouse show, as well as being glared at and still hungry, we were taken to an official HQ tour van.

Leo was a real Sherlock Holmes. In the van, Leon-Marie (who we now called "Leo") confessed to Alex that he was of mixed feelings about this tour. "You know, I have mixed feelings about this," stated Leo, pointing to the other two boys from *The Nation*. When he was told that the Crees also have mixed feelings—about the dams—he said he felt we had printed factual errors. "Come on, you know you're printing distortions in your magazine. Just between you and me," said Leo in a confiding manner to Alex.

When asked to specify what possible distortions we printed, Leo commented on one of our articles where he didn't like Matthew Coon Come winning a environmental award and talking about an area the size of France possibly being flooded. Leo stated that the La Grande complex didn't flood an area this size. We explained that Matthew was talking about the whole James Bay project (including Great Whale and NBR) and that he said an area the size of France would be affected, not flooded. After that, Leo was silent for a change. The kid gloves had come off for the first but not the last time on this "unforgettable experience" that offered "a plunge into nature, a meeting with history" (quotes from HQ's own literature).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

The Evil Empire...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

Our first stop was a lookout tower and at the top I saw something remarkable. There was actually space left on the wood so we could cut in *The Nation's* name. Yes, we were armed with a humongous 2" blade on a multi-purpose jackknife. *The Nation* was not entering into the "bowels" of the Evil Empire helplessly. Oh yes, the view was nice, showing the dam in all its glory. The giant steps, one of the retaining dikes, the power lines, the gravel roads, the replanted trees, the trees that had always been there, the rocks, the water, but I go on and on needlessly, something like Hydro-Quebec on Cree land.

Next was the impressive retaining dyke, some 53 stories high or something like that. To my unpracticed eye, I felt it was closer to 55 stories personally, but I've been known to be occasionally wrong before. I asked about potential entry into a downhill skiing resort or bungee jumping. Leo said that many people had suggested the skiing but not the bungee (guess I am an uncommonly common sort of guy). His real interest, though, was getting some Cree outfitters interested in starting a hand-gliding tourist attraction using the retaining dyke.

'Nuff said. Our next stop was to descend into the "bowels" of the dam itself after a trip to the Cree Memorial and a straight-on look at the giant steps. The giant steps are the spillway of LG-2, where each one is the approximate size of a football field. You could have some interesting play-offs there but for the fact that

they are made of stone. Perhaps with some astroturf and that famous Hydro-Quebec environmental enhancement, we could cut down on this game's season considerably. I never did like football too much, but might be willing to watch six or so games simultaneously. Imagine the advertising dollars to be made! Another potential business idea allowing Hydro to diversify. If you think this is foolish, please remember the old wives' caution about all your eggs in one basket.

The Cree Memorial used to just be a plate engraved in the memory of the Cree burial sites now underwater. Leo, bless his heart, expanded upon this and invited the Chisasibi Band Council to write a few words on Cree life and history. These would be seen by all the LG-2 visitors and would be subject to approval by the utility. Don't worry, though, as HQ only saw fit to change a few words. One of the pictures on the memorial is of the Giant's Stone. According to Cree legend, this stone fell from the sky killing an evil giant (some were good). Hydro-Quebec people pressed for the name of the giant but were given only the initials. The initials were HQ and aren't in the text. Surprise, surprise. However, I do give Hydro credit for the idea to include at least a little of the Cree presence in their presentation and tour.

Somewhere during all this, a woman on the tour verbally slapped down poor Alex for his incessant burping. To tell the truth I, as a gentleman, was getting tired of it myself and applauded her actions wholeheartedly, as our guide seemed to consider burping quite normal.

Next, we descended 140 metres beneath the Mother Earth's surface into what is known by Hydro-Quebec officials and workers as "the Cathedral." The Cathedral has a ceiling 137.16 meters

RESTOS

A LITTLE DECADENCE IN THE EVIL EMPIRE

by Neil Diamond

How good it is to sink a business indeed! (Or at least attempt to.)

My mission, which I decided to accept, was to infiltrate the eating quarters of the Evil Empire in Radisson and report my findings to CNI (Cree Nation Intelligence). Just what was the Empire putting in the digestive systems of its minions? Here was a business no one would object to sinking.

Armed with my state-of-the-art camera and rarely used notebook, I went on the tour of the dam site with my colleagues snapping photos and looking forward to finally sampling the enemy's cuisine.

After an exhaustive four-hour tour, we were almost ceremoniously ushered into the cafeteria by our overly patriotic guide Leon ("Leo"). As soon as two of my tourmates laid their eyes on the veritable smorgasbord, they remarked, "This is so decadent!"

Once we recovered from the shock of

seeing so much free food, we filled our trays with as much as was possible. Alex, our still growing editor, nearly overfilled his tray with at least four different desserts, shrimp avocado salad, some, in his own words, "weird concoction with meat in it," and a pseudo-Chinese macaroni dish of some sort. He even lost track of whose dessert was whose.

Will and Alex disagreed on the taste of the shrimp avocado salad. Alex pronounced it "putrid," and Will liked the avocado part of the salad, but only after he scraped off the "juice." I had the veau fricasee (whatever that means), garden salad and three different desserts and a cup of coffee. I advised Vickie to load up her tray with different dishes from mine so I could sample as many dishes as possible. Vickie, never one to listen to me, also had the veau fricasee (whatever that means) and the pseudo-Chinese macaroni dish. Nearly everyone in our group agreed that the desserts were the best part of the cafeteria's many offerings. Their dessert selection is rivalled only



by a certain bakery I frequent at the Faubourg in Montreal.

Conversation in the dining room centred around the stimulating topics of a certain race not keeping its end of a certain bargain, alleged printed distortions in *The Nation* and the ever-popular burping.

What did I think of the food? What do you care? You won't be able to eat there unless you're an employee or from some rag demanding free food.

high (about the height of a 27.5-story building), and is about half-a-kilometre long. With something this immense and impressive, it is no wonder some Hydro-Quebec employees went around the bend and joined the Temple of the Solar Sun, a religious cult that saw some of its members working for Hydro-Quebec arrested for possession of illegal weapons and silencers. I have to wonder if each of the 16 turbines were named as a different god. I would ask that any practicing members out there, still not identified, remember that the Bible says—not to idolize those things below the Earth's surface. Look it up some time. You could say Hydro-Quebec's Cathedral may have changed good Christians into pagans, but I wouldn't because I don't know what religion they were before their conversion.

In this, the "bowels" of the operation, as it were, there was a continuous hum and vibration. It was the 16 mighty generating monsters working to produce some of the almost-half-but-not-quite power needs of Quebec. All motorized vehicles (one does get tired walking around this gigantic complex) were electrical, since I guess they had power to spare and gas emissions would've posed additional problems in this technological marvel located in the Middle North (Far North if you're from the U.S. where some of this power is sold). I wanted to try one of the vehicles out, but this was nixed by our guide who was still trying to understand just what *The Nation* was doing there. He kept his cool while I stole (actually borrowed) a worker's jumpsuit, gloves and helmet to allow Neil some special photos.

At this point, Leo brought up another *Nation* sore point for him by attacking one of my articles concerning the 150 jobs guaranteed by Hydro-Quebec in the La Grande Agreement. He seemed to think that because the Crees asked for this clause, the Crees were somehow responsible for fulfilling it and Hydro-Quebec didn't have any responsibility. He also used some of the arguments made in *The Nation* on why the utility was having problems meeting the employment target of 150 Cree jobs. Leo expanded on this theme many times when we didn't reply to his allegations and arguments. I almost told him I didn't work for the GCCQ and only reported these things, but settled for pretending that I didn't know who had written the article. We were very

"In this, the 'bowels' of the operation, as it were, there was a continuous hum and vibration."

non-confrontational for the most part.

Soon the good times of seeing the "surge room," turbines and other "bowel" features came to an end. I was pleased to learn that electromagnetic fields weren't of a nature to harm HQ employees. Indeed, Leo stated that, according to a study paid for by Hydro-Quebec among others, it was inconclusive that electromagnetic fields helped cause leukemia or other health problems. I guess this study goes right up there with the tobacco industry's studies on how smoking may not cause certain health problems.

I have two other money-making schemes for Hydro-Quebec. (After all, as a company owned by all Quebecers, wouldn't I want to see them make a profit? last year's was over \$700 million.) It's quite simple: Rent out "the Cathedral" as a movie set. Many of the scenes would be immensely successful as sci-fi or action shots.

Another potential use for the two "inland seas" created by Hydro-Quebec would be depth-charge testing. Not only would it kill all those mercury-laden fish, but it might get rid of some of the vegetation causing the problem. Maybe then we could put into effect Hydro-Quebec's idea of sending fish down south as a source of fertilizer for farms.

On the way back, Leo pointed out the site where a monstrous cafeteria had once stood. He boasted that in its heyday it could serve 7,000 meals in 90 minutes. This was the most impressive undertaking by Hydro that I had heard that day. Imagine the catering potential of Hydro-Quebec. They could feed the entire Inuit Nations of Northern Quebec at once. Yet another potential money-making idea for HQ is to take that technology and go to some of the starving nations around the world and charge the United Nations for that service. This would go far to improve their public relations image.

Speaking of food, we were starving as we hit the cafeteria. You'll have to read Neil's article (page 20), since I never steal another man's bread and butter. Well, not

lately anyhow. During the meal, I came across one familiar face from Mississini. I was curious and asked him bluntly how it was working for The Evil Empire. He told me that while he would rather be in his own community, it beat living on welfare. He did contradict Leo's claim that there are 30 Crees working for Hydro-Quebec, saying there are only 10 permanent jobs and about 12 temporary positions occupied by Crees.

As we left I looked back knowing this was a trip most Crees should take. It always helps to hear the other side of the argument and to see what's been done. Though Leo and I would never agree, I can understand what he thought he was and is doing on Cree Territory.

After this trip I came away feeling that The Evil Empire, like Black Sabbath, isn't so evil after all. In their own way, within the limits of EuroCanadian values, Hydro-Quebec has done great things.

Maybe they aren't great things to the Crees, but we have to stop thinking of it as evil. It might help just to think of it as a self-centred, dysfunctional, spoiled brat that always expects to get its own way, but evil, I think not!

Leo's last words were an invitation for more Crees to join the 10 to 15,000 people who take the HQ tour every year. Give him a call at 819-638-2456 and tell him Will sent you. I'm sure he'll be pleased. P.S. The tour is FREE.

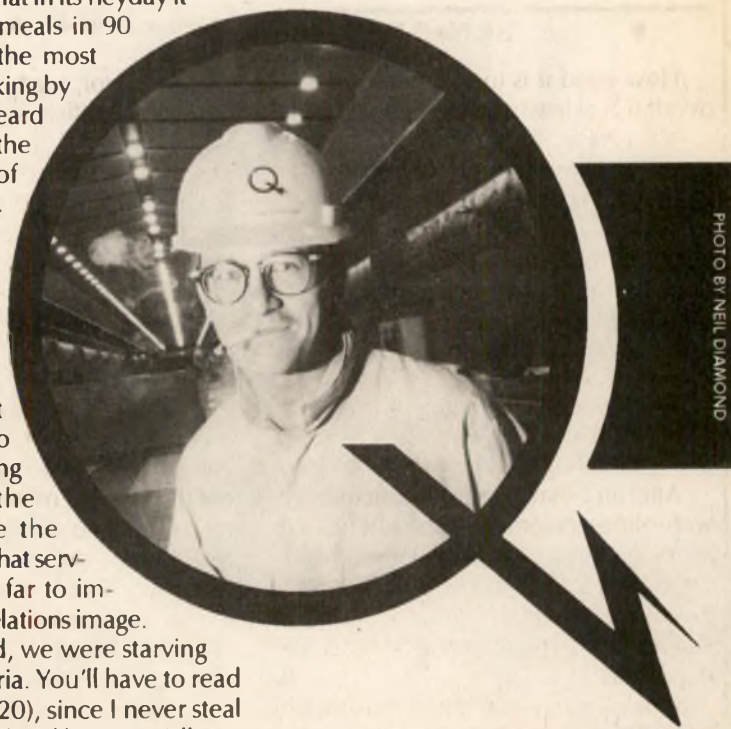


PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

QUEBEC ATTACK ON ECOLOGISTS BACKFIRES

by Peter Kuitenbrouwer

NEW YORK—Quebec's defense of the Great Whale project here appears to have backfired.

For a couple of years now the Quebec government had taken a back seat in the controversy, choosing to let Hydro-Quebec defend itself in New York against attacks by the Crees and U.S. environmentalists over its Great Whale project.

Then in March, the Quebec delegation in New York decided to go on the attack. Reed Scowen, Quebec's delegate-general for the northeastern United States, speaking at a breakfast at the ritzy Americas Soci-

ety on Park Ave. in Manhattan, delivered a scathing broadside against U.S. environmentalists.

"The contribution of U.S. environmental groups to the energy debate in Quebec has been at [an] appalling and senseless level," Scowen said. And he said environmental groups are using the Great Whale issue "for one purpose only—fundraising."

As evidence, Scowen cited the lack of commitment to the issue by Bobby Kennedy Jr., who works with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"Their media star, Robert Kennedy Jr., has found more interesting photo opportu-

nities in British Columbia," Scowen said.

But David Freeman, president of the New York Power Authority, one of Hydro-Quebec's biggest American customers, says the attack has increased his suspicion of the Quebec government's motives.

"To question the motives of Bobby Kennedy Jr., whom I've worked with for 20 years, is a bit much," Freeman said.

In the past two years, the Power Authority has cancelled \$18 billion U.S. in contracts for electricity from Hydro-Quebec. And in April, Con Edison, after discussing environmental and native issues with its stockholders, put an 18-month moratorium on talking to Hydro-Quebec about electricity purchases.

Hydro-Quebec, meanwhile, points out that its sales outside Quebec last year increased by almost 20 per cent, reaching 15.5 billion kilowatt-hours. Sales to the United States accounted for 87 per cent of those exports.

Scowen said his attack strategy was well-thought-out, and successful.

"We made a conscious decision to respond to their in-your-face aggressive remarks with the same kind of reply. It was discussed, it was thought about and that was the decision we made, and it worked. Since then there has been almost a total absence of this kind of rhetoric coming from the NRDC or any of the other agencies."

But Freeman says Scowen's comments failed to convince him that the Quebec government can impartially arbitrate the conflict between the James Bay Crees and Hydro-Quebec. "For the first time it raised the question in my mind, when he launched this diatribe against my friends in the environmental movement—is he up with the judges or down in the gutter slugging it out with the Crees?"

"It seemed to me that he was taking off his robes and getting down in the gutter to slug it out, which disturbed me."

HYDRO SLAMMED OVER GREAT WHALE STUDY

HYDRO-QUEBEC IS on the defensive over the proposed Great Whale River Project.

The utility is being pummelled over its flawed environmental-impact study into the \$13.3-billion project. The most embarrassing development came when a panel of experts paid by Hydro-Quebec itself released a report saying the 5,000-page study is "gravely inadequate" in looking into the

THE NEW VIDEO ABOUT GREAT WHALE

POWER OF THE NORTH

WITH MUSIC BY:

METALLICA TALKING HEADS

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KASHKUN AND MORE...

"THIS MOVIE WILL LEAVE YOU BREATHELESS UNTIL THE END"
- THE NATION

NOW IN YOUR
COMMUNITY!!
AT NORTHERN OR
OUDAA STORE

effects of the project on the Crees.

Hydro hired the experts to make an "independent" analysis of its impact study. "The study, in its present state, does not contain all the elements to make a decision [on the project's acceptability]," said the president of the panel of experts, UQAM professor Camille Limoges, at a press conference in Montreal. The analysis said Hydro has "seriously underestimated" the impacts of Great Whale on the Crees.

Hydro's impact study must conform to a stringent list of guidelines set by five government committees looking into Great Whale. The committees have until Sept. 15 to decide whether Hydro's study is adequate or whether more study is needed.

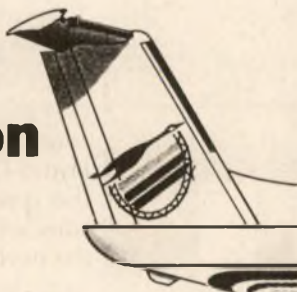
The chairman of one of the committees is furious at Hydro-Quebec for hiring the independent panel in the first place. "The fact that this is considered to be an expert, objective opinion pisses me off beyond belief," said Peter Jacobs, chair of the Kativik Environmental Quality Commission, in an interview with the *Gazette*. "That assumes my committee is not objective."

Jacobs was named to Kativik by the Quebec government. He added that Hydro's hiring of its own experts "creates the impression of trying to do an end run [around the official review committees]. The end run, frankly, is not going to work."

In another development, the *Montreal Gazette* reports that Hydro paid many of the dozens of companies that contributed to its impact study thousands of dollars to submit comments on the quality of their work to the five government committees. Not surprisingly, the companies all praised their own work.

—Nation staff

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AIR CREEBEC

Benthos

by Claude Otter

She sits by the shattered window, watching the pouring rain
She curses the day she was born in a world of sorrow and pain
Her dreams, empty like the bottle of beer in her trembling hands
The hands that held the bottle more often than her own children
She wants to cry but there is nothing left, only the pain within.

She is only thirty-two years old, going on ninety-five
It's an everyday struggle to feed the kids and to stay alive
She a battered and broken woman, the bottle her only friend
She wonders if all this misery and emptiness will ever come to an end.

Her memories like rusty, splintered razor blades in her head, the
beguiled,
Never quite remember clearly the last time they ever laughed or smiled.


They found her body down by the rapids, a week after her thirty-third
birthday

Another statistic for the government bureaucrats, who live far away,
From the hopelessness and the dead end streets of an Indian reserva-
tion

Strewn with broken beer bottles and fragile dreams of many First
Nations

Oh! Canada, our homes on Native lands...

This poem is dedicated to the sisters, brothers, grandmothers and
grandfathers of Davis Inlet, especially to the children. And to all the do-
gooders in all levels of government, please don't do us any more favours.
Your "good intentions" are killing us.

 **Hyde
Houghton**

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A TÊTE-A-TÊTE WITH BROUILLARD

Richard Brouillard is a familiar figure to many Crees. He is one of the top consultants working for the Cree economic entities. In March, Bill Namagoose, Matthew Swallow and Eddy Diamond wrote a stinging letter accusing Brouillard of conflict-of-interest because he is both the controller of the Board of Compensation and a consultant to one of its subsidiaries, Servinor Food Wholesaler Inc. Servinor has borrowed \$8.9 million from the Board of Compensation's cash-management system.

In an interview with *The Nation*, Brouillard tries to set the record straight and talks about the future of Cree economic development. He says Crees should develop a better understanding of their economic future and have a debate on their economic independence.

by William Nicholls

The Nation: You have referred to Bill Namagoose, Matthew Swallow and Eddy Diamond's letter as insulting, reprehensible and unprofessional [see *News*, July 29]. Do you feel you were unfairly criticized in their letter?

Richard Brouillard: To put it mildly. Yes, unfairly. Because it does try to give blame to one individual in 20/20 hindsight. In the sense that if it looks like things are the fault of somebody, that's why I try to convey in the letter that it's not a simple situation. That's why I say it's reprehensible. The people who signed the letter, used them and twisted the facts anyway.

So I try to use some language that isn't vulgar but that conveys the situation.

The letter suggested you are in a conflict-of-interest, since you are both an advisor to Servinor and to the Board of Compensation. Why wasn't it a conflict-of-interest?

For the last four years since I was asked to look into the affairs of the Board of Compensation on a part-time basis, I've been asked to look at a lot of the files of CreeCo. itself and its subsidiaries.

And the basis is, I guess, very simple. If there's a problem in a subsidiary and I can help in solving it, that would help the subsidiary, and if it helps the subsidiary, it helps the owner.

So the conflict-of-interest was never seen. This is a new invention by these people for reasons I still haven't understood.

Once you're helping a subsidiary which is 100-per-cent owned by the Board of Comp., and if you help the subsidiary make profit, like in the case when I helped Cree Construction when it was in difficulty, like I did with Cree Energy when it was in difficulty—that helped the Board of Comp. So I still don't understand how conflict-of-interest could be construed for some twisted reason.

There have been some changes in the cash-management policy since then. Do you see these as adequate or should there be more changes made?

Well, these types of things are more in the hands of the Board, and they can be changed as the necessity occurs. The situation of putting some constraints on the amounts taken by a company—I think that is totally adequate.

Maybe the cash-management system should be looked at more on the basis of profitability. If a company becomes profitable in the short-term, the cash-management system still remains for the Crees in general a very useful tool. And it has proved that. Because it permits a subsidiary to get a loan or a line of credit at a very fair rate.

The money stays within the Cree world and that has proved to be very profitable and useful for the last eight years.

I don't think if three people suddenly think it's not worth it, it should suddenly be taken away. I think it would be much more worthwhile to have a profitable discussion of what is the cash-management system, how it came to be, who makes the decisions and how it's used. And those discussions have not taken place.

That's why in my letters I have tried to convey some of those points. It's been reviewed regularly, it's been discussed at the Board regularly, reports have been made. To me, the only surprise I have out of that is that it was discovered by three people who suddenly think someone is taking money out of the cash-management system. In fact, that's not at all the way it happened. And in fact, what I think is terrible in that is that they knew that. They are people sitting on the Board; they've seen the reports. My question is still: Why are they doing this? I still don't understand.

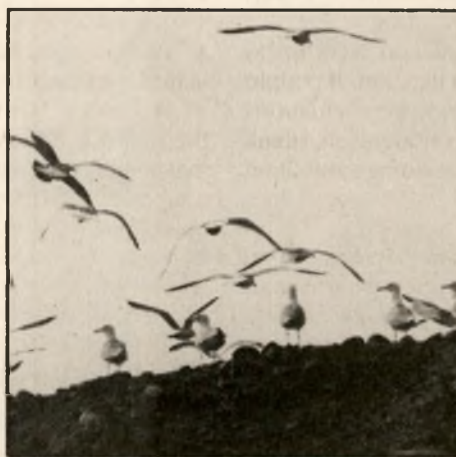
In your letter responding to Bill, Matthew and Eddy, you said Cree economic development is a difficult sub-

ject because there are social, political and business factors to take into account. What problems and solutions do you see to these?

What I meant is when evaluations and judgements are made after the fact, maybe the same factors should be taken into consideration. For example, if you start a business, you can

say we could maximize profits by having so many jobs. But you can make a decision—and it can be a valid decision—saying: "No, we will have more employees." Like we did a few years ago at Cree Energy, because they are Cree and we want to create jobs.

Obviously, you're making a choice between maximizing profits at that point in time and decreasing profits while trying to maximize some other social impact.



But when three years later somebody comes up and says, "I want to look at the financial statements," and says, "Gee, you're not getting good rates of return and not taking into account the other factors," that's when things get very complicated, because the points of decision are sometimes not related to the points of evaluation.

I think it's very valid to have a company where you make a decision not to have profits, but to maximize job creation. But it also has to be very clear that when such a decision is made, that the objectives are clearly set out and that the objectives are taken into consideration after the fact.

And that has occurred very often, and that's what I mean when I say it's complex. I don't say the complexity should be taken away. Because I don't see a point in time that you could maximize only one of those aspects. You can't just maximize profits one day, because then you might have to locate or create jobs a different way. On the other hand, you can't just maximize job creation. Then you could have a systematic loss situation that would have to be compensated for some how.

So how to balance all that is complex, and I think will remain like that. If people are in the position to do some evaluations but don't take that into consideration, I think those people should be doing something else.

In your letter, you also talk about the cash-management system, and you say it's been a constant cause of concern for both Board chair Roderick Pachano and yourself. How do you report to the Board on how the system is being used?

Well, if we go way back, it's been used at different times. There are times when I personally made a very strong presentation to the Board to make sure the cash-management system was not misused. For me, it works on a case-by-case basis and the concern is to make sure the cash-management system is used in the best interests of the Crees.

In the case of Servinor, if that's what you're getting at, when the decision was made to go ahead with the construction of



Servinor [a reference to the food wholesaler's \$4.5-million warehouse in Val d'Or], obviously there were two ways to finance the interim period between the decision of construction and the long-term financing. It's called bridge financing in technical terms.

Well, the tool was there and at that point in time, what's very important to note here in the case of Servinor is we went back to the Board twice. We verified very clearly that the basic assumption of the project was that the Crees would mostly in the majority come into the project, which was the basis of the break-even situation. It was not the whole break-even situation, but if all the Crees come in, all you need after that is approximately 7 to 9 per cent of the Abitibi-Temiscamisque region to have a profitable situation. Well, the situation is that we have that percentage of the Abitibi region, but not enough of the Crees came in.

When you look back at the time when it was decided to go ahead, everybody said it was very simple. The Crees will come in, we'll get that proportion of the market, we'll have stability.

Now had that profitability been there, then the long-term financing would have been put into place. The money goes back into the cash-management system, and everything would have been very normal. And during all that period of time, the

money would have gone to the Board of Compensation and not some exterior bank.

So based on that concept, it was a win-win situation for the Crees, except that one of the basic assumptions has not come into place. And like at the meeting at the Board, I've asked that this situation be discussed. But the real reason should be discussed, that the basic assumption was that 100 per cent of the Crees would come in. Any corporation in the same situation having the same tool would have done the same thing. Because it was the normal business way to do it. But as it turns out, with the Crees not wanting to go in, suddenly the long-term financing is more difficult.

So that's where the real problem has been all along. It's not in the way the cash management system has been used. It's been used in a very normal business way, under the circumstances at the time which were discussed and approved by the Crees at the Board meetings. So for me, it is a constant concern. Not a concern in the sense that it is going bad. Concern in the sense that it's being monitored and watched by all the entities using it. In the case of Servinor it was, it drew, it was being built, the equipment was being bought, the land was being bought, the inventory was being bought and by the time this was finished and we started looking for long-term financing, then we hit the other problem that I just explained. It's not a simple situation. It can't be explained simply either. Very tough to explain in two sentences.

Do you expect Servinor to become successful? Because you say in the past, businesses have lost money when they just started out.

Yes, if I look at the situation and the way it's developing in the other markets, the Inuit market, the North market, even the Abitibi market, I would say to you they have all been very satisfactory. Where we don't know is in the Cree communities and the Cree merchants. If these people would accept to come in and buy from Servinor instead of the competition, we could get to the break-even point very quickly. Because the difference between the present level of sales and the amount necessary to

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BROUILLARD...

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break even is getting very small.

So a little effort from two or three of the major clients in the Cree communities could make a big difference. That's how close it is. So yes, I am confident there can be a solution. It can be fast or slow depending on how it's going to be perceived by the Cree merchants. And some of them even admit that the price we're offering them is the same as the competition. But they just say, we don't know yet. We want to wait.

So there is no apparent reason why this is going on, and I assume this type of media hype and the wrong presentation of the facts have not helped. And I can't blame them for that because they have the facts that are reported to them. So it is quite a complex situation.

But the whole project of Servinor had two objectives. First of all, it was to make sure the Cree merchants would stop being at the mercy of outside suppliers, which in the past had wild price changes. The second objective is that if Servinor was accepted by the Cree merchants, you will have lower prices, better service and you will also have a profitable operation.

All this made sense, the studies were made, checked by outside sources, and everybody came up with the same conclusion—that if all these assumptions would become fact, you would have a great little company where the Crees would again be in control of one very important aspect of their life, which is food. Like they're trying to do with construction or airlines, so that you're not at the mercy of outside people.

What do you think of the recent takeover of the board of directors of Servinor, Air Creebec, CreeCo. and the rest by the Board of Compensation?

Since I've been working for the Crees, I've always accepted whomever the Crees name to run any business. And I think that if the Crees feel it's the thing to do at this point in time, that is fine with me. My job is not to have an opinion on Cree politics. It is to say how can we run business in the best way possible.

You've expressed concerns about the widespread diffusion of the letter written by Bill, Matthew and Eddie that was reported on in *The Nation*.

Not only *The Nation*. What I meant is the widespread use of the CCs of the letter [sending copies to other people], even before asking questions—like shooting first and asking questions later.

In fact, I read this letter in your newspaper before I saw a copy of it myself. Well, I heard about it but I didn't see it. And I want to make a point here. I heard people talking about the letter, and I have to admit I said we'll deal with it when we get a copy. Then someone said it's already been published in *The Nation*. So then I said I want to see the letter. So I tried to get a copy.

You said this letter is harming your reputation and you'd be considering your options. What did you mean by that?

I think at this point in time, I will leave that question open. My options are still open and I will consider what needs to be done to make sure that the facts get known. That's what is important to me. If it can't be done through normal communications that are available in the Cree world, then there is only one left. So if I have to use it, I will.

Anything else you would like to add?

I would like to add that I wish the tools the Crees have given themselves in the economic development sector could be better understood by them because they are very interesting tools they've got in their hands.

If they understand these tools better, some of the conflict will go away. That's the reason I wanted to work for the economic development of the Crees because I feel very sincerely that there can't be political independence if you don't have economic independence. You need to have an economic backbone to sustain political endeavours.

And I still feel the best way to resolve the problems between the Crees and the white society is to be equal. To be equal means to have equal opportunities and equal means. The best way to do it is through economic development and being a big player in the most important fields the Crees have in the economic developments that touch them.

I think the Crees who created CreeCo. at the start had the right vision. Whether it needs adjustments is another matter. One hope I have is that these tools are not seen as enemies or drains, but something that can very useful for the Crees in the future.

There's a bigger discussion that has to come somewhere—hopefully through debate in medias like yours where a larger debate can happen. The level of discussion should go from asking questions about the operations to elevating the discussion and saying: Do we want these tools and how can we use these tools for the nation, not for each individual? That would be very good. Going from nasty points to a discussion of what it's all about.

The reason I'm doing this interview is that I think in any democracy, it is necessary to have information. If it's badly used, it's better to not have any. I'll leave you with that point.



PHOTO BY NEIL DIAMOND

CHISASIBI HOMERUN DERBY WINNERS

Bill Lazarus (left) holds up the cash he won in Chisasibi's recent Homerun Derby. It took Bill five rounds to beat second-place Glenn Salt to win the \$130.

WILL THE REAL SELF-GOVERNMENT STAND UP?



BY EMANUEL LOWI

The Quebec government has signed an agreement that may allow the Inuit to become the first aboriginal nation in the province to achieve self-government.

The deal, signed July 21 in Montreal, only establishes the framework for negotiations on self-government. But it commits Quebec to the principle of greater autonomy for an aboriginal nation and sets a clear deadline—April 30, 1995—for completing negotiations.

The agreement comes at a time of great uncertainty in Quebec, practically on the eve of the crucial provincial vote scheduled for Sept. 12. It remains to be seen whether a full agreement on self-government will be forthcoming in the post-election climate.

The deal serves several purposes. Both Quebec and the Inuit say they want to develop a government in the North that responds better to the realities of the region and to the aspirations of its residents. They also want to establish a way to turn over to the Inuit powers and responsibilities currently in the hands of Quebec City.

The agreement also aims to streamline the many organizations and authorities that operate in Nunavik and that were created

as a result of the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Some of those organizations have overlapping responsibilities, which leads to no small degree of competition among them.

The deal was signed in Montreal by former federal cabinet minister Francis Fox (Quebec's special negotiator) and by Simeonie Nalukturuk, President of Makivik Corporation. But Nalukturuk did not sign the agreement in his capacity as Makivik President; instead, the agreement recognizes him as negotiator for the Nunavik Constitutional Committee, or NCC.

The NCC was formed after an Inuit-wide election to choose a self-government working group in 1989. It drafted a constitution for the territory and started work on a plan for a Nunavik Assembly. Its activities were reduced during the last two years of Charlie Watt's reign as Makivik President, when negotiations on the Great Whale hydro-project picked up speed.

The kind of self-government contemplated in the recent deal is limited. For example, the agreement recognizes the wish of Nunavik residents to establish their own elected regional assembly, a type of local parliament. But this new assembly would remain under the authority of the National Assembly in Quebec City.

And while the framework agreement signed in July confirms the supremacy of Inuit rights contained in the JBNQA and protected by the Canadian Constitution, the deal cannot be said to grant the Inuit, as a people, any new rights.

Both the Inuit and Quebec make the point that self-government in Nunavik will be non-ethnic. The plan will apply to people who live north of the 55th parallel, a region that currently includes 14 communities with a majority Inuit population.

But it remains unclear exactly who will benefit from the self-government scheme. The agreement signed in Montreal grants the future Nunavik Assembly jurisdiction over the entire territory north of the 55th, not including those lands belonging to the Crees and the Naskapi. No native group other than the Inuit is involved in the present plan.

It's worth remembering that the JBNQA grants anyone married to an Inuk every right that Inuit have. Spouses of Crees have no such formal JBNQA privileges. And because the plan is being called non-ethnic, any non-natives living north of 55 can and will be able to participate in this new government. Clearly, this is not aboriginal self-government in the way most native nations see it here in Canada.

The story gets even more complicated in the southernmost of Quebec's Inuit communities. Kuujuaaraapik, a.k.a. Whapmagoostui-Great Whale River-Poste de la Baleine, is home to more than 600 Inuit. They and any non-natives associated with their community—and perhaps all other non-natives in town—will get self-government. Nothing for the Crees now though.

Perhaps it's ridiculous to expect the construction of a new Berlin Wall on the shores of Hudson Bay. But clearly there will be two classes of people, two classes of rights among Great Whale's residents.

The situation is even more doubtful in Mailasi-Chisasibi, where more than 60 Inuit now live after relocating there together with the Fort George Crees. The Inuit of Chisasibi are full voting members of Makivik Corporation, and participated in the election which chose Simeonie Nalukturuk to head the Nunavik Constitutional Committee. But since they live south of the 55th parallel, they are completely excluded from the self-government package.

Emanuel Lowi is a freelance journalist in Montreal with a lot of northern experience.

REPORT FROM THE CREE NATIONS GATHERING

PHOTO BY ABRAHAM BEARSKIN



by Helen Atkinson



The first Cree Nations Gathering took place July 18-24 in Opaskwayak, across the Saskatchewan River from The Pas, Manitoba. The purpose of this gathering was reviving a Confederacy of Cree Nations, which our Elders say was in place before the Europeans came to this continent. There were people from many communities and I met people from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and, of course, Manitoba.

The James Bay Crees of Quebec were well-represented and people from Chisasibi, Waswanipi and Whapmagoostui made the long trip to this historic gathering. Delegates from the regional youth council were Glen Cooper (Waswanipi) and Lisa Petagumskum (Whapmagoostui). Glen also represented the Waswanipi youth council. Jody House, Valerie Sam and Jessie House went on behalf of the Chisasibi youth council, while Robbie and Sally Matthew (Chisasibi) and Robbi and Elizabeth Dick (Whapmagoostui) took part in the Elders' Gathering. Chisasibi was represented by our Chief, Violet Pachanos, and Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come made the keynote address. As well, many people

drove three days from Chisasibi to observe and be part of the gathering.

The James Bay Crees also took part in the organized evening social activities. Jody House won first prize for jigging and first prize for singing at the talent show on Tuesday night. He also won second prize for jigging at the second show on Thursday. Robbie Matthew Sr. won a raffle draw and on Friday night, at the Monster Bingo, three James Bay girls got lucky. Two shared the \$6,000 prize while the other one went home with a thousand dollars.

When we first arrived in Opaskwayak for the gathering, we heard that the brother of hosting Chief Francis Flett had just passed away. There was a wake on Wednesday night and the funeral took place on Thursday afternoon. Out of respect for the Chief, his family and community, the gathering was adjourned from Thursday noon until Friday morning.

The youth, women's and Elders' gatherings were all at different locations taking place simultaneously. I sat in on the Elders' Gathering and one of the most powerful images I have of it was hearing the Cree language being spoken by almost everyone. Although I could not understand every phrase, the more I listened, the more familiar I became with the sounds. Surprisingly, the Cree of Alberta have a very similar dialect to ours, whereas I had to listen more carefully to the Manitoba Cree.

At the end of the Tuesday session of the Elders' Gathering and also at the end of the pow-wow on Sunday, the people from James Bay were all given a gift in the giveaway. On Wednesday, there was a traditional feast with tons of food—moose, goose, duck, sturgeon, pickerel, bannock—all cooked in a variety of ways. And the service was impeccable. Neil Diamond (our very own restaurant critic) would have loved it.

Before the Gathering wrapped up on Friday morning, the Chiefs, youth and Elder representatives came together and made presentations until 2:00. Plans were made for the next Cree Nations Gathering to take place in Opaskwayak during the same week next year. Those present at this Gathering, mostly Elders, created the spark that is needed to start a Confederacy of Cree Nations council fire.



It's pow-wow time

As we were arriving at the Opaskwayak Traditional Pow-Wow late Friday evening, it was just beginning to rain. When it stopped, the dancing continued amid hordes of the every-hungry national bird of Opaskwayak, the mosquito. To tell you the truth, a few times I wished I were somewhere else because I really didn't feel like dancing—until M.C. Eric Robinson (who is also the MNA for the northern Manitoba riding of Rupert's Land) called all the James Bay Crees to the dance area.

We were given a warm welcome with a round dance and it seemed like everybody came to join us. The spirit of friendship/kinship, the characteristic Cree "joie de vivre" and Eric's M.C.-ing made it easy to dance the rest of the intertribals that evening. The mosquitos and the slight sprinklings of rain didn't seem to be so bothersome any more.

Josie Cox and William Pachano from Chisasibi and Glen Cooper from Waswanipi were in full regalia. Josie came in second in the men's traditional competition and was also given the honour of carrying the eagle staff when the flags were taken down at the end of the pow-wow.

The weather the next day was perfect—with the sun in a clear blue sky heating up the air while a westerly wind cooled it—a

good day for dancing to the singing of Seekaskootch (Onion Lake, Sask.), the Pigeon Lake Singers (Hobbema, Alta.), the Whitetail Singers (James Bay, Ontario side), the North Buffalo Singers, North Buffalo Juniors (Opaskwayak, Man.) and Bloodstone (Pukatawagan, Man.)

Chief Violet Pachanos and I were supposed to be driving to Winnipeg, about 600 kilometres south, to catch the noon flight to Montreal the next day. But when the supper break came around, we didn't want to leave, there was so much good feeling in the air. Sometime later that evening, the eagle whistle blew and I was glad we were there dancing at that moment.

We stayed until it was getting ridiculously late to be starting out on a long drive. As we left, I was a bit sad to be leaving all the new friends I had made and the community which had made us feel so welcome, but the healing spirit of the drum made me thankful and happy that this whole experience happened and I was part of it. We had, with the help of our Elders and ancestors, started building a strong foundation for confederacy—rooted in friendship, kinship and mutual concern. In that way, the first Cree Nations Gathering was a success.

An official report will eventually be released on the Cree Nations Gathering. It will soon be available in your community.

FROM GREENLAND WITH LOVE

Uka Wilhelm, a Greenlander and medical student from Denmark, recently spent five months in Canada studying physiology at McGill and improving her English. In May, she was invited by the Kativik School Board to speak to secondary school students in Puvirnituq as part of their "Career Days."

Uka (which means "white hare") was born and raised in a village on the middle of the west coast of Greenland where her father was the Lutheran missionary and teacher. Because her mother became ill when she was a baby, she was raised by the family of the church catechist. A few years later, a local family gave her mother another baby girl, in the custom of the Greenlandic people, and then her mother also gave birth to another baby, Uka's brother.

When Uka was about 10 her mother returned to Denmark with the two younger siblings, while she stayed in Greenland with her adopted family and her natural father. Uka moved to Denmark to complete senior high school and returned to the capital of Greenland with her adopted family and her natural father. After graduating from medical school, she plans to return to work in rural Greenland. Uka, 24, hunts caribou when she's living in Greenland. She wrote this letter to her friend, Jill Torrie.



they are doing in the North. We had a good discussion but I am not as worried and pessimistic as they are. Forty years ago, Greenland was in exactly this situation and at this stage. The difference though is that people

in PUV have everything—snowmobiles, computers, telephones—but the development within the community, the mentality, the schooling and so forth is not at the same level as their physical surroundings and facilities.

In Greenland, the facilities, television and telephone, etc. emerged gradually during the development of the community. Even if changes continue to go rapidly in Greenland, these changes are going on even faster in the communities in Northern Quebec. Just like Greenland, these changes will

result in a lot of problems. There is nothing strange about this. The changes happening cause social problems, and in turn, the social problems change the community; and the people want this change.

I really felt I was back in Greenland for a few days—the people, the smiles, the values and the problems are the same. But nature here is nothing compared to Greenland. Greenland is the most beautiful place in the world! And the town of PUV is boring. All the houses are the same and look like containers or boxes in a line. I stayed with a nice French-Canadian family from Montreal. I took a lot of pictures which I'm looking forward to showing you. On Saturday, I went hunting with a guy and he shot a caribou. We met a big group of around 15 to 20 and we followed them for 45 minutes. At the end he finally killed one. It was so great. I would like you to have such an experience. I felt like I was in heaven!!

There is still a lot of snow in PUV and it is probably spring in Montreal. I will try to keep studying about lungs, kidneys, brains and whatever they want me to learn, even though the weather is nice outside. Hope you are doing well.

With love from your Uka.

by Uka Wilhelm

Dear Jill,

The days in Puvirnituq have flown by and I am now sitting in the plane going to Montreal. A little baby in Puvirnituq had jaundice and the small hospital plane evacuating her to Montreal had space for us, which means that instead of spending the entire day flying on the regular flight we will be in Montreal around noon.

My speech to the secondary school kids went well. I had written down everything I wanted to say so I wasn't nervous. Well maybe a little. They enjoyed it when I spoke in Greenlandic because the melody and many of the words are the same, even though it doesn't really make sense when you try to have a conversation. Each dialect is very strong. Bringing my slides of Greenland saved both me and the students because everything I said had to first be translated into English, and then Lisa Koperqualuk translated it into French. I was informed that the French translation was school policy, even if it did take forever. I soon stopped saying much and let the slides do the talking.

The program for "Career Days" was so organized that I did not really have the opportunity to spend more time with the kids in the secondary school. However, I was able to follow some of the classes around and get to meet some of the students.

The kids liked "Career Days" and it is nice when things are well-organized. But I was not impressed. The event was all done by outsiders from the south and none of the Inuit were involved in organizing or arranging anything. I mean, if they continue like that the situation will be the same in 50 years' time. It is always difficult to involve other people if you know you can do it better on your own. But efficiency is not most important right now in these communities. I think it is necessary for the outsiders to have patience and to give some of the Inuit more responsibility, even if it isn't going to be as effective and well-organized from the start. But maybe in 30 years' time.

I spoke to some of the staff at the hospital about this and they—nurses, doctors and midwives (or "earthmothers" as we say in Greenlandic)—were confused about what

CHRISTOPHER HERODIER GOES BACK TO THE LAND

by Judy Aldous



Christopher Herodier is a busy man. When I first met the young filmmaker at the Commercial Centre in his home town of Chisasibi, he quickly shook my hand and said, "Do you mind if we walk while we talk?" I accompanied him to the Band Council office, to the bank and finally to his home. Once inside, he poured two hot cups of tea and excused himself as he reached for the ringing phone. "That should be the James Bay Cree Communications Society calling. They want to interview me about this year's caravan."

"This year's caravan," the second annual one and the product of this hectic schedule, is a canoe trip from Chisasibi to Great Whale organized by Christopher as a symbol of support to the people of Great Whale in their struggle to save the Great Whale River from hydroelectric development. "I want to show the people of Great Whale that we care and that we support them in their struggle because we know what [a dam] can do," explained the 32-year-old after his 10-minute telephone interview.

Christopher and his cousin, Ernie Herodier, also of Chisasibi, filmed last year's caravan of eight canoes and 40 people. A video, *Let's go back to our Land*, was released in March 1994. This was

Christopher's debut film and he plans to make a second one of this year's voyage. *Let's go back to our Land* documents the four-day canoe trip and the traditional gathering in Great Whale that followed.

But the video speaks of more than the caravan. With its beautiful scenes of the James and Hudson bays and candid footage of people fishing and preparing hides, the video celebrates the traditional Cree way of life. "There's a lot of stories out there that say we don't use the land any more, that we stay home, watch television and drink beer," Christopher explained sitting cross-legged on his couch. "Sure we do that but we still go out there hunting and fishing. We still depend on the land. I wanted to show that from a Cree perspective."

The caravan is also a way to unite the community, if only for a few days. "I want to get the community of Chisasibi working together again because we're divided. I want people to come together to start helping each other and knowing each other, like we did in Fort George."

It was in the community of Fort George that Christopher Herodier was born on December 1, 1961, the third of Elizabeth and Roderick's seven children. Christopher was raised by two great aunts, Edith and Alice Louttit until he was 11, when he returned to live with his parents just a few houses away. "I remember visiting my parents when I was young, but I always thought my aunts were my real parents," he recalled.

At 15, Christopher like many James Bay youth, was sent to high school in Hull, Quebec. He remembered being "a fairly good student," though his reason for wanting to succeed was an unusual one. "I wanted to get out of high school and go on and do something else, so I figured the easiest way

to get out of there was to graduate," he recalled with a smile. Despite this incentive, Christopher returned to Chisasibi empty-handed after two years. "I was missing one credit," he said with a smirk. "I failed French oral."

His years in Hull set the stage for an erratic and inglorious scholastic career. In 1978, he enrolled at Northern College in Timmins, Ontario but soon transferred to the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Saskatoon, where he studied for two and a half years. "I really don't know what I wanted to do in life so I was having fun exploring. I was starting to question who I was." It was in Saskatchewan that he first came to appreciate his heritage. "When I came home for Christmas I used to go see my grandfather and drill him with questions. Before college I didn't really care. When I went out West, I realized it was a gift to be Cree."

Christopher mentioned his now-deceased grandfather, Ernest Herodier, often, remarking on the many lessons the trapper shared with his grandson. "It's odd, you know. Some of the things I do today, I think, 'I already knew this and I realized it's something my grandfather taught me.'"

By the winter of 1982, Christopher had dropped out of college to start working at CBFG Chisasibi Community Radio, his first introduction to the world of media. Over the next nine years, Christopher developed a love-hate relationship with the station, working as an announcer until he was asked to resign ("I was late for my shows") and then returning as program manager in 1987. It was at CBFG that his interest in film was ignited. "They had a camera at the station. I used to play around with it all the time. So much so," he explained laughing, "that they wouldn't let me use it any more."

It was also while working at CBFG that he met Sarah Mark-Stewart of Eastmain,

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HERODIER...

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who is now his wife and the mother of their three children, Christopher Jr., 9, Dale, 8, and Timmy, 7. Sarah teaches Grade 1 Cree at the James Bay Eeyou School in Chisasibi and takes time off work to be part of the caravans.

In 1984, a year after their marriage, Christopher and Sarah, who was pregnant with their first child, packed their bags for Montreal. With his interest in media sparked from working in radio, Christopher had enrolled in communications studies at Concordia University. It was his last stint as a student and the two years in Montreal were not happy ones. "I shouldn't have gone. I screwed up because I was really heavy into drinking," he explained unabashedly. He has since given up alcohol completely because of the pain it caused him and his family.

He also remembered how alienating it was being far from home. "I was lost. I didn't have anywhere to go." Sarah nodded in agreement as she poured two new cups of tea. "I was far from my people and from the land." By spring 1986, Christopher Jr. was almost hit by a car on a busy Montreal street. "That woke me up. I thought we have to get out of here. So Sarah called up her mom and said, 'Can we come live with you?' Her mom said, 'Yes, please come home!'"

Home has been Chisasibi ever since and both Sarah and Christopher want it to remain that way. Christopher often leaves the area to work—he is about to begin his second contract with CBC-Montreal as a writer/broadcaster for *Mamoweedon Television*, but the family remains behind.

Chisasibi is the perfect base to realize the myriad of story ideas that Christopher has stored in his imagination. His dreams for the future include a film about a Cree trapper and one featuring the Elders of various Cree communities. "I want to show the Cree people as people," he said. The thread linking his diverse ideas is that film can be a healing agent. "I know that the Cree people are lost and they need something to bring them back on track. We're being bombarded by outside influences and we need something to fight back with." And at the centre of this fight is the land, the land captured so beautifully in *Let's go back to our Land*. "For us to survive, we need to know who we are. Without the land, we don't have an identity."

All of these future plans were on hold as Christopher prepared for the upcoming Chisasibi Eeyou Caravan, which left on July 30. "So far we have eight confirmed canoes. One canoe doesn't have a motor and a whole bunch of people want to come but don't have a canoe. That shouldn't be a problem," he assured me. He remembered preparing for last year's trip and the difficulties, financial and otherwise, he encountered. "I got knocked down a few times but I had to get up again. This year, we already have 22 sponsors," he added proudly.

And after this year, will the caravan become a yearly event? "I want to keep the caravan going as a cultural organization," he explained. "But next year I want someone else to organize it. It's a lot of work and I want to give someone else the chance. We've just planted the seed." While that plant grows, Christopher said he continues to work "day-by-day." Despite his boundless energy, he emphasized that he has not charted out his future. "I'm not aiming for the stars. When I get carried away, I slow myself down and think, there's still so much to learn."

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101-BIRTHDAYS

We wish our father Sinclair Stewart a happy 82nd birthday on July 30—we hope this one and many more. Love from his wife Demeris and all their children.

I want to wish my husband a belated b-day, Carl Bosum, which was on July 21, with lots of love from your wife Annette and kids! xxoo

102-WEDDINGS

Congratulations to Luis Eguren & Maria Rifiorati on their wedding held on July 9. Good luck & have a lot of babies. From friends.

103-ANNIVERSARIES

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Beginning...

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back 300 to 600 years. We can just imagine what the flooding will do to the land. Cree knowledge of the land is not only handed down from one generation. It will take more than just one generation to learn or adapt to a strange new environment. With sudden overnight changes, you cannot use the same skills you had the day before, unless you know what you are dealing with.

What if there were some permanent changes? Where knowledge is passed down from one generation to another, what do you tell the next generation? I don't know.

That is how we Cree hunters and trappers feel. With the drastic changes to the environment, it's like a whole new beginning, starting all over again from scratch.

Whenever hunting societies stood up and argued for nature and said things like, "We are part of nature," this has been used against them, and they have been labelled as "uncivilized" and their land taken away, so as to make better use of it. Is this what happened here?

In the past, before logging operations ever started, the Cree tallymen and hunters had a workable wildlife management system which everybody respected. Once logging operations started on remote traplines, what was once a workable wildlife management system for centuries was blown right out of the water.

The natural movements of wildlife are destroyed. Because of the logging operations and the sudden appearance of roads, the overkill of wildlife happens. In a whole new different environment, what little wildlife is left is in constant danger and confusion. What used to be the rate of wildlife reproduction can never recover.

And unchecked forestry activities continue on and the aftermath follows. There were incidents where non-native loggers bragged of killing a moose metres away from the road beside a pond during season. The fate of wildlife which Cree hunters depend on is at a critical period. There are people who say there are some signs of recovery after "eight to 10 years." Ten years in somebody's lifetime is very long. What are we hunters going to eat during that time? Rocks? Someone might think the forestry roads have made Cree hunters travel easier and more mobile. The same could be said about the whole population that does not

care about nature except for trophies and greed. People who tend to believe there are positive aspects of forestry operations often use a leap of faith and a willingness to suspend disbelief. Maybe because there are people out there who do not care about the environment, or who know nothing about nature or the environment. Definitely, these are the only two reasons there are.

As you may notice, we have not discussed the heavy pollution to the land, water and the air caused by the sawmills; and they do close down one day as we have seen in the past. Forest industries have their peak at one point. From there on, like it or not, it's downhill all the way. Definitely we will all be poor one day.

We are not accustomed to looking at the combined impacts of all forestry operations, environmentally or socially—and to make matters more complicated, at the evolution of hydroelectric development in the same region.

A lot of other environmental and social impacts from forestry operations could have been discussed. But most, if not all, events mentioned in this document relate to actual happenings on trapline W-23-A.

The same could be said of other Waswanipi traplines that are already logged out or in the process. It dawned on me one day when all of our traplines were already clearcut why we had failed in our efforts when we met the loggers to save moose yards or other wildlife habitats, no matter how much we pleaded with them. They had brought cutting plans which were already in effect. There were going to be no changes to the cutting plans. Because of this contact we had with them, it was taken or used as a rubber stamp to go ahead and clearcut.

After the few meetings with the loggers and the negative response that went along with it, we felt sad and powerless to ever have exchanges with them again, and the years went by. Less and less, the birds sang, until one day we heard their beautiful songs no more and our hearts cried out as we hugged our children and told them to pray. Nothing could slow the loggers down. They were cutting fast, because they knew their

powerful government was totally behind them. The depleting of Waswanipi traplines continues on.

Due to logging on our traditional lands, there is much less wildlife to depend on. We have much less to feed our families. On hunting expeditions, we are coming home more often empty-handed. We never hunted by chance; we always knew where we stood with nature before. During the fruitless hunting expeditions, exploring the "land of tomorrow," you will see nothing for miles around. We are saddened to have found animals and fowl starved to death or which for some other reason just did not make it. Animals that do make it are often unhealthy.

Did somebody betray a relationship? Did somebody fail to defend the land? Is that why these things happen?

The Cree hunters' and trappers' greatest fear is that all traplines will eventually be depleted. Some people would like to

argue that forestry is compatible with the hunting way of life. Yes, it is compatible with the white man's way of hunting for "sport." With logging roads, you are opening the territory to sports hunters—a territory that belonged to a hunting society that existed since time immemorial, a society that lived in harmony with nature.

The greatest encyclopedia of ancient scientific knowledge of a certain area I've come across was our own Cree Elders. With that, I have come to terms with the fact that we are one of the strongest hunting societies still existing today in the world. Can our sons and daughters say this in the next hundred years? A lot of other hunting societies have disappeared long ago. "And we wonder why."

Here, we are witnessing the dying of one of the three greatest hunting societies still existing today in Canada. A culture and philosophy that existed for over 5,000 years is slowly being destroyed. For the children's sake, let's just hope the hunting way of life may yet triumph over the worst the forestry impacts are doing to it.

In loving memory to my friends (the animals) who are still out there in the bush. I owe it to you all. Surely my sons and I would not be here today. Meequetch. Thank you. May you roam the world forever and in our hearts. —Paul Dixon

"We are one of the strongest hunting societies still existing today in the world."

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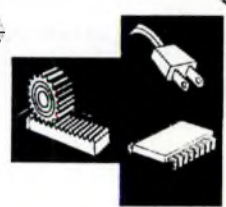
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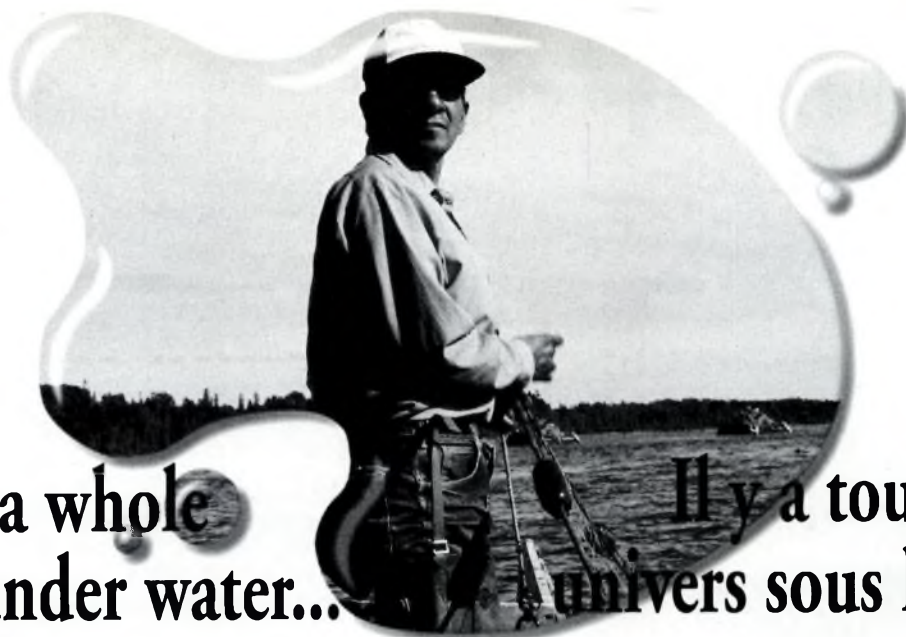
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The Fisheries and Habitat Management Branch (FHMB) of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is charged with the application of the *Fisheries Act*, the aim of which is to conserve, replenish and manage the fisheries habitat. This Act is being implemented through the fish habitat management policy whose basic aim is to increase the productivity of these habitats. All fisheries activities, even small-scale, may modify, damage or destroy fish stock habitats. In order to avoid any damage to these habitats, it is important to evaluate the impact of every project, no matter what the size.

The FHMB evaluates the impact on the aquatic environment of a wide-range of projects. In pursuing its specialized mandate, the FHMB helps to enforce the ministerial Order in Council regulating the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Process (EARP). The activities of the FHMB therefore involve making recommendations and evaluating the admissibility and acceptability of environmental studies carried out by various companies whose activities may affect fish stock habitats. The FHMB is participating, for example, in the evaluation process of the impact study carried out by Hydro-Québec for the Great Whale Project, and is also responsible for evaluating projects carried out in the Nunavik region under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement to which EARP applies.

An effort has been made to improve the habitats of several marine mammals and fish species via the four-year *Action Plan for Fish Habitat* (previously the Sustainable Fishery Program). At the beginning of the second year of the Action Plan, a dozen projects have already been tabled. It should be noted that, with the help of the Cree Nation and their traditional knowledge, habitats vital to the survival of the Beluga whale population in James Bay have been identified.

La Direction de la gestion de l'habitat du poisson du ministère des Pêches et des Océans (MPO) veille à l'application de la *Loi sur les Pêches* de façon à conserver, reconstituer et aménager l'habitat du poisson. L'application de cette loi se fait au moyen de la politique de gestion de l'habitat du poisson, qui vise essentiellement à augmenter la productivité des habitats. Toute activité, même de petite envergure, réalisée dans le milieu aquatique, est susceptible de modifier, d'endommager ou de détruire les habitats. Afin de prévenir la dégradation de ces habitats, il importe d'évaluer les impacts de chaque projet, quelle que soit son envergure.

La Direction de la gestion de l'habitat du poisson (DGHP) est responsable de l'évaluation environnementale d'une multitude de projets qui touchent le milieu aquatique. La DGHP est responsable de l'application de la *Loi sur les pêches* et participe, en tant que ministère à vocation spécialisée, à l'application du décret ministériel du processus fédéral d'évaluation et d'examen environnemental (PFÉE). Ainsi les activités de la Direction consistent à faire des recommandations et à évaluer la recevabilité et l'acceptabilité d'études environnementales faites par les diverses entreprises qui veulent effectuer des travaux affectant l'habitat du poisson. Elle participe entre autres au processus d'évaluation de l'étude d'impact faite par Hydro-Québec pour le projet Grande-Baleine. De plus, cette Direction s'occupe de l'évaluation de projets réalisés dans le Nunavik dans le cadre de la Convention de la Baie-James et du Nord québécois auxquels le PFÉE s'applique.

Avec le *Plan d'action pour l'habitat du poisson* (anciennement le Programme des pêches viables) qui s'étale sur quatre ans, des efforts ont été entrepris pour accroître la productivité des stocks de poissons. En travaillant à rendre l'habitat des poissons plus sain, il a été possible d'améliorer le sort de plusieurs espèces de poisson et de mammifères marins. La deuxième année débute et déjà une dizaine de projets ont été proposés. Notons qu'avec l'aide de la Nation Cris, une identification des habitats critiques des bélugas de la Baie-James a pu être effectuée, et cela, en tenant compte des connaissances traditionnelles partagées par la Nation.



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